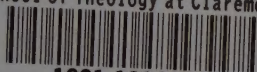


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**MODERN THEORIES OF  
RELIGION**



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# MODERN THEORIES OF RELIGION

BY

ERIC S. WATERHOUSE  
M.A., B.D.

1910

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TO  
MY WIFE

## PREFACE

THE types of religious philosophy with which the present volume deals have been selected with a twofold purpose in mind. They are intended to represent the principal modern theories of religion, and to illustrate the influences that especially bear upon any construction of a religious philosophy that may be undertaken at the present time. Two limitations have been found necessary. I have not ventured beyond the limits of Western thought, and have dealt only with the religious philosophy of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Eastern modes of thought, however, do not contribute largely to our understanding of religious problems from the philosophical standpoint, however necessary they may be to the comparative study of religion. Concerning the other limitation, I have tried to show that Neander's description of Schleiermacher as 'A man from whom will henceforth be dated a new era in the history of theology' is most of all true in so far as theology involves religious philosophy.

The critical portion of the book has been undertaken with a constructive aim. It has no claim to completeness, either descriptively or critically. Within the space available all that can be



attempted is to touch upon the salient points and assess the general tendencies of the types of thought that are considered. Such criticism as has been offered has been made from a definite standpoint. Naturally, therefore, it has varied according as the theories reviewed approximate towards or depart from that standpoint. I do not wish either to conceal or to apologize for my bias in favour of a psychological basis. 'Unbiassed' criticism only too often means concealed bias, and I think it fairer openly to acknowledge the attitude from which other theories are regarded. I trust it has not prevented me from seeing the value even of those types of thought with which I am least in sympathy. I have at least endeavoured not merely to approach them from a hostile standpoint, but as far as possible to understand them and view them in the light of their own principles.

The first part of this book is not intended, therefore, to be merely critical, but preparatory to the understanding of the psychological and historical method outlined in the second. I have been compelled to limit so great a subject as that with which the second part deals, to a review of the sciences which afford the groundwork, and some suggestions towards the lines upon which, as it seems to me, an empirical religious philosophy should be constructed. I desire only that these views should be allowed to take their chance amongst all the others. It would almost seem as if certain types of philosophy were inevitable to certain minds. The types of thought I have passed by have seemed to me not so much false



as inadequate to the requirements which religion, as I understand it, demands. In the long run the theory most generally adequate must prevail most generally, and one's wisdom, perhaps, is to offer one's own suggestions to the service of the truth, and leave truth to decide how much or how little she may require of them.

In the Appendix I have touched upon one or two types of thought, not properly to be called religious philosophy, but none the less sufficiently influential to demand that they be not passed by wholly in silence.

Whilst I do not expect agreement with my views from all, I shall be disappointed if they seem unintelligible. Possibly the needful condensation has involved the style somewhat, but I have attempted to avoid terminological technicalities, in so far as it has been possible. If there are any who are convinced that depth of philosophical insight is proportionate to its difficulty of comprehension, I can only assure them that it is often more difficult to avoid than to employ such language when once one has grown accustomed to it; but any who remember their own struggles to read themselves into the technical modes of philosophical speech will surely wish as much as possible to spare others.

I desire to acknowledge the kind permission of the publishers of *The London Quarterly Review*, which has enabled me to reprint in Part I. ch. viii. and in Pt. II. ch. i. certain portions of articles which appeared in that journal.

Whilst acknowledging my indebtedness to many

teachers, I must especially mention my debt to Professor William James, of Harvard, by whose death, announced as these pages pass through the press, the philosophy of religion is incalculably the poorer. Apart from his work in religious psychology this survey could not have been written. Little less is my debt to his general philosophy. Whilst I cannot count myself entirely at one with the pragmatists, the method I have adopted is mainly pragmatic, and I know no method which is more able to do justice to an empirical religious philosophy.

I may add that I hope to be able to deal more fully on some future occasion with the application of empirical principles to religion and especially to the Christian religion.

My sincere thanks are due to my friend and former tutor, the Rev. A. S. Geden, D.D., M.A., for kindly reading the proof-sheets and affording me many profitable suggestions.

E. S. W.

NORBURY, S.W.

1910.

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## INTRODUCTORY



## THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY

It would be a matter of difficulty to find another word that has been subjected to as many definitions as, or employed in more senses than, the term 'religion.' Its definitions may vary from one that expresses it as vague emotion to another that includes a whole system of ecclesiastical dogma. Even amongst men qualified to judge, it may range from Seeley's 'permanent and habitual admiration' to Martineau's 'belief in an ever-living God ; that is, in a Divine Mind and Will ruling the Universe and holding moral relations with mankind.' Indeed, it seems customary to define religion so as to extract from it anything that any one may desire to see in it.

The various senses in which the term 'religion' is employed further this confusion. It denotes an inward experience and an outward expression, but within this primary distinction several others are drawn. The outward expression may be individual or collective, it may be historical or dogmatic, it may be expressed in terms of conduct or of belief, and the term religion is used for each and for every significance. A man's creed, church, conduct, or feelings are indifferently referred to as his religion, and the same term is applied to an historical

movement, a doctrinal statement, and an emotional experience. Under the circumstances it would be a task worthy of Sisyphus to endeavour to bind into one definition all the senses in which the term is employed, and it need not be attempted here. It will be the easier course first to endeavour to sift the essential as distinct from the subsequential within this aggregate of significations.

There must be, it is evident, a clear distinction between the experience of religion and the expression of religion, and the former must be primary, the latter secondary. The question is, therefore, What may be understood to be the essence of religion as it is experienced by man? The answer will depend upon the standpoint adopted. If the matter be regarded philosophically, it may be replied, as Hegelians reply, that religion is the effort of man to transcend himself. Now, no doubt, there is a very important truth conveyed by this statement, but none the less it is one that will not apply alike to many religions, and not at all to some. Moreover, it is an answer gained from the wrong point of view.

It is one of the fundamental convictions of the present survey that religion, for the purposes of religious philosophy, must be subjected to the same method of investigation that is applied to any other part of our experience, namely, the scientific method, and the data for religious philosophy are thus to be provided by the science of religion; that is to say, the psychological and historical study of the subject. Religion, therefore, must be approached as a concrete fact of experience, and when psychology and

history have delivered their findings, a religious philosophy is necessary to deal with them. The question, therefore, as to the essence of religion must be referred to psychology and to history first of all, for such answer as they can give.

History bears witness that, so far back as it can trace, man has been religious. The pre-religious stage so often assumed in anthropological accounts of the origin of religion is entirely hypothetical. Apart from one or two dubious alleged exceptions, everywhere religion is and has been universal; and in the face of this undoubted testimony the apparent exceptions, even if established, would signify little. If, however, it be asked what common elements are to be found in religion as it is everywhere displayed, it would be difficult to name a single doctrine or a single act. None the less, some such common characteristic there is, and, stated in the most general manner, it would seem to be the belief in a higher order of things into due relation with which man must enter in order properly to adjust his life. A word or two is necessary to explain this vague statement. The characteristic 'higher' is always present in that the object of the religious attitude is necessarily conceived as superior to man, and, though not universally conceived as superior in every respect, its superiority is regarded as qualitative not quantitative merely; that is to say, 'higher' rather than 'greater.' For 'order of things' 'power' might be substituted without serious inaccuracy, for, though there may be no clear conception of power, the object is usually dynamically regarded. 'Order of things' is, however, even more general.

The idea of relation is essential; religion is never belief alone, and the adjustment of life is equally fundamental. It may be that religion has a greater or a less effect upon life, but some effect it must have, for in all his earlier stages of culture especially, man has no use for or interest in a conception that has no such bearing, even if he were able to form it.

The only considerable exception to this general statement is Buddhism, and even here the exception is more apparent than real. Buddhism, as taught by Gautama, the Buddha, was a philosophy and an ethic rather than a religion. In theory much of the system is still atheistic, but frequently the Buddha, or the spirit of all the Buddhas, is deified, or at any rate serves the place of a deity. The practice differs so greatly that it is impossible to make a general statement. Chinese Buddhism has imported native deities, and exists on terms of friendship in many cases with Taoism and Confucianism. In Tibet Buddhism is so overgrown with other practices that Lamaism is the more correct designation of this strange compound of demonolatry, mysticism, magic, and Catholic ritual, the last-named being due to the influence of early Nestorian missionaries. It would, therefore, appear that in so far as Buddhism serves as a religion it does so by virtue of added elements. Pure Buddhism is simply a philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I am informed by Dr. Marks, who has had a unique experience of fifty years' acquaintance with Burmese Buddhism that, speaking generally, whilst Burmese Buddhism is theoretically atheistic, the Burmese Buddhist, when interrogated as to what he hopes to gain from the



Psychology, besides investigating individual manifestations of religion, throws light upon the nature of this common basis which history reveals. It shows that every pulse of consciousness is compounded of three factors—will, feeling, and thought, and that the nature of the religious relation must partake of each and all. If it should lay special stress upon feeling, it none the less witnesses to religion as characteristically a mode of behaviour also, and shows its pervasiveness throughout the whole of man's life. Of the origin of religion neither psychology nor history can tell. To distil it from an artificial concoction of the sentiments of fear and wonder is a purely imaginary proceeding. All that can be said scientifically is that religion exists as far back as we can trace, and in its lowest as well as its highest stages partakes of the characteristics enunciated above.

This broad fact, to which all religion witnesses, of belief in a higher order, proper relation to which is necessary for the right adjustment of life, is, however, a sufficient basis for religious philosophy. The relation is an individual relation primarily, and that affords the self, or soul, as its subject. The object will need closer definition, and it will subsequently be identified, as indeed it is always identified by the clearer types of experience, as God, and religious philosophy is the philosophy of God and

repetition of the threefold formula of faith in the Buddha, the monks, and the law, expresses the opinion that it will bring him help from 'somewhere.' In such cases it would appear that Buddhism serves as a religion without giving the conceptions of a religion.

man. All that is essential to it, therefore, is afforded in the primary fact of religion ; but if it narrow its basis somewhat, and engage directly with the more fully developed religious experiences, it will discover in them clear and additional convictions with which it may deal. The advantage of the method is that it does not demand a manufactured basis, or a postulate, or any debatable ground. It starts directly from an established fact. It is the fact of religious experience rather than the outward expression which is the basis adopted here. It has been suggested recently that the basis of religious philosophy is in the comparative study of religion. In some ways this would be more definite and easier to handle, but no one would suggest that the basis of a new philosophy could be found solely in the history of philosophy. Philosophy always starts from experience, and religious philosophy naturally takes the same course. Philosophy is one thing, and the history of philosophy another ; religion is one thing, and the history of religious expressions another. Religious experience, and not its outward expression, is fundamental.

Having thus arrived at a general idea of what is primarily to be understood by religion, the question may now be asked, What is to be understood by the philosophy of religion ? Philosophy is man's attempt to co-ordinate and explain his experience, and, as a part of that experience, religion falls within the purview of philosophy. Hence the incorporation of religion into a philosophical world-scheme, in one sense, would be a philosophy of religion.

On the other hand, any of the historical religions might call in philosophy to give a metaphysical character to its dogmas, or a philosophical expression of its views, and the result would also be in another sense a philosophy of religion. In the one case philosophy incorporates religion, in the other religion incorporates philosophy. Plato's treatment of the myths of Hellenic religion might serve as an illustration of the one tendency, and Philo's speculative allegorizing upon the Old Testament the other.

None the less, the sense in which the term 'philosophy of religion' is here understood does not coincide exactly with either. The former method fails to do justice to religion. If it were non-existent, the philosophical *Weltanschauung* would be able to dispense with it without inconvenience, especially in the case of those philosophies whose sole criterion is logical. Indeed its absence in their view might be more help than hindrance. The other method does not do justice to philosophy. It borrows it to justify previously adopted doctrines and to adorn them with a show of learning, but rejects it when and where it does not serve. A philosophical theology is not a philosophy of religion.

The types of religious philosophy which come under notice subsequently, whilst some lean towards the former and some towards the latter method, start with one which does neither. The significance of Schleiermacher lies in this, that he did not merely regard religion as one thing amongst many to be comprehended in a general world-scheme, nor as so many dogmatic conceptions to

be speculatively justified, but he singled out religion as a great and influential psychological fact, and asked how it was to be explained. It is in this sense that the philosophy of religion is here understood, and for this cause Schleiermacher is to be regarded as marking a new epoch in its progress.

I believe that the modern sense of the term 'philosophy of religion' increasingly conveys this significance, and that its future lies upon this path. Even where the psychological method is not adopted, religion is not to be generalized into philosophy, but specialized by it; not treated incidentally, but independently. In this way the fullest justice is done to religion, and not less to philosophy.

It may be admitted that, to select the fact of religion in this manner for philosophical inquiry, is to make an abstraction from experience for a special purpose. All specialized studies are abstractions of certain elements of experience upon which focus is centred to throw them into prominence. The ideal of knowledge is the final synthesis in which all the various separations within knowledge which we have to make in order first to study this then that aspect of experience, are united and viewed as a whole. Whilst we may still be far from that goal, it is the ideal which inspires all our learning. If it could be attained, it would be neither a science nor an art, nor even simply a philosophy, but would partake of the character of a religion.

There is more than one indication of this conclusion. It might be summarily stated from the

very idea of God. Often, it is to be feared, the God of philosophy and the God of religion are two separate beings, though the unity of God is axiomatic. The final synthesis can know one and only one, and for its purpose God is alike, whether He be regarded from the devotional and personal standpoint of religion or the theoretical standpoint of philosophy. Now the conception of God is the highest conception possible, and ultimately is all-embracing, the ground of all that is. The final synthesis must therefore be in terms of God, and as such will be not merely a philosophy but a religion.

One branch of our knowledge is specially directed towards this final synthesis that has been shadowed. Metaphysics seeks to provide such a comprehensive scheme, and a consideration of the character of metaphysics will suggest the same conclusion as was reached from the idea of God, that the last word of all is a religion. If metaphysics is limited to the evolving of a logically consistent plan of thought, quite apart from the concrete character of man's life, no doubt this will not be the case. But this is an abstraction, and a very abstract abstraction, and cannot possibly be regarded as an attempt to express the completeness of experience. A perfect metaphysic therefore must be regarded as the harmonizing of all man's interests, the valuation of the whole of his experience. It will be therefore a scheme of values, not merely a logical process of thought.

This is further evident when it is remembered that we only know such reality as we attempt to know, and that accordingly this attempt is a *sine qua non*

of the revelation of reality to us. When it is asked what conditions such an attempt, it is seen that the answer is the desires and needs of life—in other words, the search for values. It follows that an ultimate metaphysic must be a complete expression of the values of existence.

It would seem therefore as if Lotze, who, it will be subsequently seen, bases metaphysics upon ethics, is substantially correct, and that ethics, instead of being simply a factor in the metaphysical scheme, supplies that scheme with a basis, for ethics is the science of values. But ethics itself, at last resort, must depend upon the source of all values—God.<sup>1</sup> From Him alone can come any guarantee of the ultimate character of the good we seek. If the good be the ultimate measure of reality, an act of faith on our part is necessary to believe that we are so constituted by the Creator as to seek what is good in the truest and most permanent sense. Eliminate this, and it seems to me that one can only fall back on a hedonistic sanction for ethics, and measure reality by a purely human-made standard built on a naturalistic sense-basis, a veritable apotheosis of anthropomorphism. The only alternative to a man-made universe of this kind is that which refers the 'goodness' of the good we seek, and the 'value' of the values, to their ground in God; so that once more, therefore, the conclusion is suggested that the final synthesis will partake of the nature of a religion, the perfect and absolute religion, the complete harmony of man and God, and in such a religion philosophy also would perfect itself.

<sup>1</sup> cf. Part I. ch. ii. p. 101.



This conclusion is such as to enhance the importance of both religion and philosophy. It reveals religion no less than philosophy as a foreshadowing of the ideal that knowledge seeks. Religion deals expressly with the experimental aspect, striving for the perfect adjustment of man's relations to God; philosophy seeks the completion of knowledge. The ideal itself is the perfected relation and the completed knowledge. In the alliance between religion and philosophy, which is called the philosophy of religion, it may therefore be claimed that the relations of the two most fundamental aspects of man's experience are examined, and no study can offer a deeper fascination.

The task of religious philosophy is here understood to be threefold—mediating, critical, and constructive. It is mediating as between dogmatic theology, and, might I say, dogmatic philosophy? It has been a constant source of wonder to me that the importance of an understanding of religion has been so little realized in philosophy. For both, God is the last word. Philosophy constantly assumes, however, that religion is merely a more popular and emotional method of dealing with what philosophy exhausts with more exactitude. None the less, the fact remains that, whilst God has never been more than a postulate, a methodological device, or a hypothetical conclusion in philosophy, He has been made real by religion. Philosophy has something to learn from religion, and a religious philosophy may result in bringing into philosophy generally a humanizing, an elasticity, a concreteness which have only too often been lacking.

Critically and constructively, the philosophy of religion applies itself to the understanding and the elucidation of religion, and to the task of harmonizing the data which religion affords with the other aspects of man's experience. In doing so it takes one step at least towards that ultimate harmony of all which, it has already been seen, is the perfected philosophy and the perfected religion.

Critically, religious philosophy must correct the deliverances of the religious consciousness which are wrongly expressed, for, whilst it cannot deny their existence, it can influence their expression. It can discriminate between the essential and the accidental in religion, and deliver it from the tyranny of antiquated dogma. It can throw the light of criticism upon encrusted rite and sanctified superstition, and help religion to extricate itself from the temporal and transient in its outward forms.

Constructively, it will seek to give expression to the convictions of the religious consciousness and to those truths which religion sets forth in her dogmas, assisting to make religion articulate, systematizing, and co-ordinating. There is no function for religious philosophy in creating a religion; but at the present time, in view of the rapid changes that have taken place not only in physical science, but also in the science of religion and the literary and historical criticism of religious matters, there is a very urgent need for religious philosophy to assist in formulating a conception of God and a religious world-view adequate to co-exist with the wider knowledge of the times.

The need for religious philosophy is not less at the present time by reason of the weakening of dogmatic theology. When it was possible to regard the Scriptures as God's dogmas, all that was necessary was to collect the passages, historical, poetical,<sup>1</sup> and parabolic, which were supposed alike to contain them and to set them forth as a complete expression of faith. Criticism has rendered that course no longer possible, and, whilst theology will still have abundant scope in expressing the doctrines of the Christian religion, in its apologetic aspect and in so far as it is endeavouring to set forth a rationale of Christianity, it is likely to tend more and more to take the shape of a religious philosophy. It might be an exaggeration to say that the theology of the future will be a religious philosophy, for the functions of the two are distinct; but it is increasingly evident that theology cannot fill the place that is occupied by religious philosophy nor undertake its work.

It seems necessary to add a few words in explanation of the manner in which religious philosophy is regarded in these pages. Its starting-point is viewed as the fact of religious experience, and it attempts to interpret it as it is for the experient, regarding his experience as it seems to man to be, as at once the most general and natural basis for all philosophy. Whilst all philosophy professes its devotion to experience, it is frequently found that experience

<sup>1</sup> I can think of no illustration that more vividly expresses this method than one of the 'proof-texts' of older theology: 'To the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God,' which was used to demonstrate our Lord's divinity.

is soon limited to rational experience, and its volitional and emotional qualities left over as mere accidents. This unwarranted proceeding destroys *ab initio* any chance of doing full justice to experience, and neglects its most insistent and highly important factors.

From this starting-point it judges experience from a humanistic point of view. In so doing it encounters that considerable prejudice which contrasts this 'ignominious biped on his fractional planet' with the vastness of the universe. It might have been hoped that the leaven of Idealism would rehabilitate mind in the eyes of such quantity-worshippers who are overwhelmed by the thought of the block-mass of the universe, but apparently it is not so. None the less, the charge of anthropomorphism is utterly unwarranted. It is more applicable to the mode of thought that seeks to probe the universe with the needle-point of a dialectic, and compel it to deliver its secrets before man's unaided reason. It is still more applicable to that other mode of thought which conceives that the littleness of man is such that the greatness of God is indifferent to it, for that is to represent the Creator as preoccupied with world governance, too deeply engaged in big schemes to attend to minor details. The infinite greatness of God is established rather than damaged by His concern for the infinitely small. A humanistic standpoint does not present itself as the measure of all that is, but merely as the measure of what is for man. It is simply the recognition of the maxim *Homo mensura aut nulla mensura*. It is not the humanism of Positivism, for

it recognizes in the religious consciousness a direct relation to God, and believes in a revelation of His Will. A human philosophy may not be 'God's philosophy,' but it need not believe itself utterly separated from it. A religious philosophy cannot be simply a philosophy of God and nature; it must be a philosophy of God and man. There may be higher beings than ourselves in the universe, and they may have higher world-views. There may be an angels' philosophy more complete than our own, but, as we hold no ticket of admission to angelic debates, it is necessary to be willing to learn from our own human standpoint, content with such things as we have.

Beginning, therefore, with concrete experience and proceeding from the humanistic standpoint, an empirical course is followed. 'Empiricism' is a term in philosophy which has a somewhat dubious history. That history is not involved by the adoption of the term here, for it is held to convey simply the experiential and concrete method. It does not repudiate metaphysics, but only the purely abstract method of metaphysical construction. A complete religious philosophy will ultimately involve a metaphysic, but it will be a metaphysic of the fullness of life, not merely a formal ratiocinative consistency. It may even be able to show that such a scheme fails even to satisfy its own chosen warrant of consistency; at least it will reveal its inability to satisfy the demand that metaphysics should embrace the whole of reality. The metaphysic which it will involve must therefore be an expression of the implications of the whole of experience.

The religious experience which forms the basis of religious philosophy may be sought impartially in all religion. Possibly owing to the influence of the Ritschlians, a view is sometimes advocated that to treat religion generally and Christianity as one religion amongst many is an inversion of the right order, which deals first with Christianity as the complete and absolute religion, and defines others by reference to it.

It will, however, be recognized that the classification of Christianity amongst other religions does not logically, or even implicitly, constitute it upon an equal footing with them, any more than to class man amongst the mammalia implies the equality of all mammals in all respects. The jealousy for the primacy of the Christian faith which sometimes inspires such a protest is therefore groundless. The question is one of procedure rather than precedence, and the procedure here adopted seems to be preferable in that it affords a wider basis, follows the historical order of development, and is more likely to do justice to the elements of truth contained in all religions. Modern Christianity does not deny that God has revealed Himself in divers times and manners to divers men, and that religion generally witnesses to truth more completely set forth in Christianity. It is also possible to approach by this method those who would deny the other, and even to serve Christianity better by demonstrating rather than assuming its intrinsic superiority.

The method here adopted may therefore be followed without prejudice to the claim of Christianity to be the goal of progress. With that claim



it is not intended to deal in the present volume. It is well within the bounds of possibility that in a few centuries Christianity will replace the other religions of the world, as it replaced the other religions of Europe. Still more will it be likely progressively to realize its essential implications, and to embody its inward spirit. The absoluteness of Christianity is ahead, not behind. The time may come when religious philosophy will be Christian philosophy, and Christianity, not only in outward extent but in inward essence, the universal religion. At present, however, it seems preferable, for the somewhat technical purpose in hand, to treat religion in general, and leave its highest expression in Christianity to be dealt with in a manner more likely to do justice to it. At the same time, in so much as the types of religious philosophy which will come under notice are all constructed from within the Christian religion, although they are dealt with simply as philosophies of religion, they cannot fail to assist in revealing the significance not only of religion but also of Christianity.





PART I

THE HISTORY OF MODERN RELIGIOUS  
PHILOSOPHY



## CHAPTER I

### RELIGION AS FEELING : SCHLEIERMACHER

#### § 1. *Schleiermacher's Standpoint*

WITH Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher may be said to begin a new chapter in the history of the philosophy of religion. Since the dawn of systematic thought, philosophy and religion have met in that borderland where philosophy shades off into religion and religion into philosophy. Here, too, have arisen philosophies tinged with religion and religions tinged with philosophy. But in the modern sense of the term, suggested in the previous chapter, that is to say as signifying the investigation of the roots and fruits of religion, independently treated, and tested with a view to a comprehensive expression of its truth, the philosophy of religion begins its course in the work of Schleiermacher. He it was who first deliberately chose religion, the fact of religion, as the central subject of inquiry, neither treating it as a department within general philosophy nor from the purely ecclesiastical and theological standpoint. The significance of Schleiermacher lies, first of all, in the fact that he began to analyse and evaluate religion *in itself and for its own sake*. Whatever difference there may

be in results, that is the aim of religious philosophy, in the best sense of the term, to-day.

In the second place to Schleiermacher must be attributed the first definite religious philosophy on a psychological basis. Starting with religious experience, and boldly assuming its universality, he cut the first sod of a road which many have extended. Whatever limitations are attached to Schleiermacher's psychology, and to his conception of religious experience, they do not outweigh the importance of his deliberate choice of an appeal direct to the centre of religion, instead of threading devious and tortuous by-ways to gain a glimpse of it from afar. It seems, therefore, fitting that the types of thought which are here reviewed as representative of modern theories of religion should start with the new standpoint introduced by Schleiermacher. To some extent at least his influence is manifested by them all; and if religious philosophy has to-day a strength and independence that it never previously possessed, it is not an exaggeration to say that its rise to power began in the effort of Schleiermacher.

Schleiermacher's biographers, expositors, and critics are wont to begin with an outline, more or less detailed, of his antecedents, and the influences which attended the youth and adolescence of his thought. Born in 1768, the son of a chaplain of the Reformed Church, pupil of the Moravians, student of the Illumination, companion of the Romantics, with such material it is a problem of nicety to untangle his theories and sort them into heaps, labelled according to their origin. But an

ordnance-survey of a watershed does not describe a delta, nor does the mental force of a thinker obey any law of the conservation of energy that has yet been formulated. The developed product rather than the natural history of Schleiermacher's thought excites interest, and to recollect, without undertaking the precarious task of apportioning these influences, will be sufficient.

More important, however, must be reckoned the *Zeitgeist* Schleiermacher encountered : on the one hand the ethical rigourism of the Kantians, reducing religion to a footnote to the text of morality ; on the other the excessive intellectual gnosticism, subordinating it to the knowledge deemed adequate wholly to comprehend it. In religious circles the dogmatic view prevailed, regarding religion as a bunch of duly formulated doctrines, and side by side existed an Erastian conception of Church and State particularly distasteful to Schleiermacher. The heightened colour of his own views is a contrast-effect gained from these positions against which his reaction was directed.

Schleiermacher's was a brain unusually absorptive and eclectic. Plato among the ancients, Spinoza, Kant, Fichte, Schlegel and Schelling, with others, amongst the moderns, contributed to, without constituting, his outlook. Fused by a nature strongly religious, their thoughts underwent assimilation in his mind, and became material for an original system ; for, whatever else may be attributed or denied, his originality is beyond question. Schleiermacher reveals many affinities with Mysticism, yet has far more elasticity and coherence ; he is deeply tinged

with the poetic, artistic temperament, yet never lacks systematic and consecutive powers of thought ; whilst the whole has the glow of personal feeling, and is warm with the pious fervour of the saint.

The form into which Schleiermacher's theory of religion was cast was provided by his association and sympathy with that brotherhood of rebellion, the Romanticists ; but whilst the hands were the hands of Esau, the voice was the voice of Jacob. The passionate protest of the Romantic school against the existing intellectualism, at once meagre and tyrannical, was led by Goethe, Schiller, and Herder ; but, in common with most revolts, its excess, in the Schlegels and other members of the circle produced extravagances worse than the barrenness against which it was launched. It was not so with Schleiermacher. Though his rehabilitation of feeling was in accord with the principles of the Romanticists, his religious temperament and personal piety enabled him to abstract much of the strength of that movement, and at the same time escape much of its weakness. None the less, the recoil from one extreme to its opposite seldom produces a lasting type of thought. Sympathisers, admirers, and followers Schleiermacher did not lack, but even in his own day he could never have been said to have established a school, still less since ; yet his distinctive contributions to religious philosophy, the central contentions of his work, though reshaped by those who, with the lapse of time, have been enabled to refine them by separating the by-products of their origin, are to-day powerful in influence.

The chief characteristics of Schleiermacher's religious philosophy are set forth in his greatest book, first issued in 1799, bearing the title *On Religion : Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, referred to subsequently as the speeches—*Reden*.<sup>1</sup> Here Schleiermacher speaks purely as a religious philosopher. In his *Doctrine of Faith (Glaubenslehre)*, a later and somewhat modified position is assumed, characterized by a tendency to harmonize the unfettered theorizing of the *Reden* with the place occupied by Schleiermacher as a preacher and teacher in the Protestant Church. The *Glaubenslehre* has a nature more theological than philosophical, although the author refers to it as containing 'the outlines of a religious philosophy.'

In addition to these efforts, Schleiermacher employed a busy pen in ethics and classics, theology and exegesis, and proved himself an incisive pamphleteer on political theological matters. Though with an unusual versatility he moved among these varied subjects with a comfortable mastery, his especial bent was in an ethical direction, as the *Monologues*, *Review of Previous Systems of Ethics*, and certain other ethical studies witness. These, together with other writings, chiefly theological, some of which were issued after the author's death in 1834, contribute sidelights which serve to manifest, and occasionally to temper, the positions taken up in the *Reden*.

<sup>1</sup> The quotations introduced are taken from the admirable English translation by Dr. J. Oman of the third edition (1821) embodying the author's revision and explanations.

## § 2. *The Essence of Religion*

Entering the lists as the champion of religion in an age of great indifference, Schleiermacher makes it clear that he throws down no gauntlet for conventional views. He brands much that is usually reckoned religion as accidental, even parasitical. Belief, he declares, is not, as it was held to be, a string of duly authorized opinions concerning God and the world, nor piety the yearning for the crumbs which fall from the tables of ethics and metaphysics. The outward and visible embodiment of religion is not its inward and invisible spirit. Religion is not a particular way of acting, or of knowing, much less is it merely a useful sanction of morality. Separating the accidental from the essential, we must turn from science and morality, from sacred writings and ancient traditions, to the innermost sanctuary of the soul to discover what religion in its essence is. Its roots strike below the threshold of conscious life. It is 'the immediate consciousness of the universal existence of all finite things in and through the Infinite, and of all temporal things in and through the Eternal.'<sup>1</sup> As such, its domain is neither in knowing nor in willing, but in feeling.

The reason for this conclusion is primarily metaphysical. Other reasons which weighed much concurred, yet it is not sufficient to postulate Schleiermacher's sympathies, heredities, and training as the sole factors in this identification of religion and feeling. The prime cause I take to be the

<sup>1</sup> *Reden*, Eng. trans., p. 36.



conception of 'God' or 'the Universe' as the unity of all, and neither Romanticist training nor personal instincts. Such a unity is unknowable, but not in the sense that the totality of all things may be said to be unknowable. In the latter case the barrier is subjective, due to our limited powers of acquiring knowledge, and may partially, if never entirely, be removed. In the former case it is objective, lying in the nature of God (or 'the Universe'), which cannot be an object of knowledge, in the usual sense of the term. The path of knowledge terminates at this blank wall—beyond is not knowledge, not gnosis, but agnosticism. In feeling Schleiermacher thinks that he sees a way to this beyond. Feeling pure and simple, apart from any definite content, is for him an expression of the life and being common to us and the All. In it the All is immediately given. Religion, therefore, is of the nature of feeling.

To justify this position, Schleiermacher skates over some perilously thin psychological ice. He finds the birth-chamber of religion in a mysterious moment immediately prior to the breaking forth of consciousness from the womb, an instant so momentary that it can scarcely be described even as an instant—a term which implies at least a fraction of time, in which sense and object are one and indistinguishable, when there arises the first contact of the Universal Life with the individual, and 'you lie directly on the bosom of the infinite world.' This faint flush before the dawn of consciousness, Schleiermacher alleges, can be compared but not described, and upon it he lavishes rhetorical

imagery, though unfortunately this eloquence does not supply the closer psychological characterization that is lacking. It is, however, stated to be the original unity of intuition and feeling, the primary source of every living movement and every religious emotion. But no sooner has this wonderful original instant when the world and the one are united come than it is gone, for consciousness immediately supervenes, fracturing it into two parts, intuition and feeling, the former representing the object considered by itself, the latter the sensibility as apart from the object. Never can it return save in memory, so that in this sense, at least, Plato's theory of 'recollection' holds good.

In like manner, by grouping together feeling and intuition as included in knowledge, and opposing knowledge to activity, a similar contrast is attained. Both represent the desire to be identified with the universe through an object; the predominance of the objects impressing the ego being knowledge, the predominance of the ego impressed upon the objects being activity. Through the interplay of these two tendencies life proceeds and consists, yet neither can form by itself a complete life. But, as it is with knowledge and activity with respect to each other, so is it with feeling with respect to knowledge and activity together.

Two assumptions underlie this analysis. The first is psychological. The contrasting tendencies of knowledge and activity meet at a point of equilibrium, a unity of the ego resolving its antitheses. This unity is identified with feeling. The second is that this point is also the unity of God and the

individual, the common ground of the divine life and human life, of the One and the many. Both are assumptions, for psychology does not offer any justification for the first, nor, as regards the second, is there any real necessity to bring together God and man within this unity, and denote it as the source of religion. Schleiermacher does so, and since he describes the unity as feeling he is led to identify feeling with religion. 'Your feeling is piety, in so far as it expresses in the manner described the being and life common to you and to the All. Your feeling is piety in so far as it is the result of the operation of God in you by means of the operation of the world upon you.'<sup>1</sup>

Feeling is constituted, not by our perceptions or operations, but by sensation caused by that which is around us. For Schleiermacher religion is an effect produced in us by the operation of the Universe, or God. As such it is to be classed amongst the feelings. But that is not all. He looks upon religion not merely as 'feeling stirred in the highest direction,' but as feeling *qua* feeling, simply. All feeling, all sensations, saving such as indicate a 'diseased' state of life, he regards as religious, adding that, as a safeguard against such a diseased state, all feelings should be pious. Religion, therefore, from Schleiermacher's standpoint, is feeling not only as the abstract psychological unity he has analysed, but in the usual significance of organic sensation generally, and from this no true human feeling of any kind is to be excluded.

Schleiermacher's restriction of religion to feeling

<sup>1</sup> *Reden*, Eng. trans., p. 45.

is uncompromising. He banishes from religion, strictly interpreted, all activity. The nature of religion is passive, and it does not urge to activity of any kind. Yet, whilst a man does nothing from religion directly, he should do all things with religion, which, like solemn music, ought to accompany his whole life. This proviso has the effect of making the separation of religion and activity academic rather than actual, and does not approach in any measure the absolute divorce which Oriental, and especially certain forms of Upanishad philosophy, have decreed between the two.

In a similar way, Schleiermacher separates piety and morality. This is not to say that religion can exist without morality, but from Schleiermacher's standpoint the converse is equally true, and morality cannot exist without religion. Yet the two are separate and distinct. Principles and ideas are also foreign to religion as such. For they appertain to knowledge, not to feeling. They too may be found co-existing with it ; contemplation and description of immediate religious experience yields them, yet though they may justly be called religious, in the sense that, as religious ideas and religious principles, they appertain to religion, they are not, and never can be, religion itself. 'The sum-total of religion is to feel that, in its highest unity, all that moves us in feeling is one ; to feel that aught singular or particular is only possible by means of this unity ; to feel, that is to say, that our being and living is a being and living in and through God.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Reden*, Eng. trans., pp. 49, 50.

Religion, however, whilst certainly not a system, if by system is understood a network of correlated beliefs, may be so called in so far as the religious feelings are not arbitrary within the breast of each individual, but formed according to an inward and necessary connexion. In this sense it is like music. Music is one vast whole, but national, tribal, and individual music have their own characteristics. The individual musician, though within the larger spheres of tribal music, national music, or music generally, can nevertheless pour out his own soul in his music, making it a thoroughly individual expression of himself. In like manner, says Schleiermacher, is religion a whole and yet individual, and within it the individual must be free. No ecclesiastical or doctrinal coercion can be allowed to entangle personal experience in a yoke of bondage by demanding that its outpouring should conform to any type or accord with any set ideas. Since, so Schleiermacher conceives it, in religion itself everything is immediately true, an entire tolerance is essential. Religious systems, often corruptions of religion, are intolerant, but for this religion is not to be blamed. 'Seers of the infinite have ever been quiet souls,' and as exemplification of this the pale, pensive Spinoza attracts Schleiermacher's admiration, as his life and system still fascinate men much further removed from him philosophically than Schleiermacher, who, in an oft-quoted passage, exclaims impetuously, 'Offer with me reverently a tribute to the shade of the saintly, rejected Spinoza.'

In his *Glaubenslehre*, as well as in certain of his ethical studies, Schleiermacher develops still further

the root-idea of religion as feeling, by an attempt more closely to define the nature of religious feeling, at which the *Reden* merely hints. Owing, doubtless, to a sense of the difficulties of applying his former analysis, he is led to regard religion specifically as the feeling of dependence, of absolute dependence upon God. Such he considers the character of man's consciousness of God, though he adds that it is never experienced in its original purity, but always intermingled with consciousness of the world. This analysis, taken by itself, is defective, by reason of its disregard of the active aspect of religious experience, and not less for its omission of the sense of sin. Schleiermacher's theology, however, elsewhere meets the latter objection by designating sin as the conflict, and salvation as the reconciliation, between the God-consciousness and the world-consciousness. Such reconciliation is effected by Christ, who possessed the God-consciousness in absolute measure, thereby establishing His perfection and divinity, and constituting Himself the complete Logos, the full revelation of the Father.

A religious philosophy based upon feeling, the centre-point of subjectivity, cannot be otherwise than individualistic, and this necessity serves to rescue Schleiermacher from an often-threatening Pantheism. The development of his religious philosophy shows progressively how the current of his thought, and perhaps still more the pulling of his will, bears him away from the pantheistic bank of the river, towards the other side and firmer landing-place of Theism. The first edition of the *Reden* regards both indifferently, alike suited as expres-



sions of religious feeling ; for, since feeling is the principal thing, to represent the Deity given immediately in that feeling pantheistically or theistically is a secondary matter, to be decided by temperamental differences. The later tendency, however, substitutes frequently, though never rigorously, ' God ' for the ' Universe, ' rather according to the leaning of Schleiermacher's heart than the exigencies of his theory, unless it be contended that the above-mentioned individualism contributed to this result. The limited form that Schleiermacher's individualism took, which is referred to subsequently, would, however, render its potency for this purpose less ; yet, limited though it be, it constitutes the revival of a conception of great service in religious philosophy.

Schleiermacher provides this individualism with a counterfoil by expatiating upon the religious significance of humanity as the climate prepared to foster the flower of individual feeling. To some extent, however, nature is fitted for the same service ; and, in a passage which amounts to a fresh presentation of the Design argument, Schleiermacher displays a forceful rhetoric to show that outward nature is wondrously made to call forth and cherish the inward feelings of religion ; the Universe revealing itself to, and being understood by, the spiritual within. But Schleiermacher's Design argument is not that of Paley, nor does it spring from the delicate detail-beauty of nature :

A sunset touch—a fancy from a flower-bell.

Nor yet the vast star-set heavens above, which

stirred Kant's reverence. It is the eternal laws of nature which reveal to him the divine unity of the world. The 'World-Spirit'—a phrase which Schleiermacher distinguishes from the 'World-Soul,' and employs to denote the object of piety in every religion—must be found by a sense for the Whole, and his work joyfully regarded in this manner. Such is the true religious enjoyment of nature, and from this standpoint will be found complete harmony and co-operation between the realms of nature and of grace.

Schleiermacher's view of the immutability of the world's plan and order is strictly interpreted. It is such as to allow, for example, no place for petitionary prayer. This matter is not dealt with in the *Reden*, but in the *Sermons* it is stated that religion does not expect 'answer' to prayer, the benefits of which are in communion and fellowship with God, for any changeableness in the laws of nature would be detrimental rather than helpful to their religious function.

A better way to gain this sense of the whole exists, however—to find it within our own mind, and thence to project it to external nature, yet not merely in the individual mind, but still more in humanity. For, in a certain sense, every individual is a compendium of humanity, which lives and works in him, a sense which tints his humble dreams with a splash of grandeur. The first man, Adam, Schleiermacher declares, as sacred legend tells, living alone with God and nature, understood and conversed with neither, till for him was made humanity, flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone. Thus, becoming one of



humanity, he was enabled to form general ideas, and enter into consciousness of God, impossible to him in solitariness. Thus also, unless we ourselves have found humanity, not singly, but endless and undivided, we have not found religion. History, therefore, viewed as the record of humanity, is 'the greatest and most general revelation of the deepest and holiest,' and 'for religion the richest source,' its uttermost being only comprehended by religious feeling. For some, Schleiermacher concludes, humanity is the whole world—a prophetic remark when it is remembered that Comte was born a year previously. Yet he would himself go further, and hints that, as the individual is part of humanity, humanity itself may be part of a larger order, one form only of the infinite unity of matter and spirit—a suggestion, however, which does not receive further treatment.

The main outlines of the positive delineation of the essential characteristics of religion having been in this manner completed, Schleiermacher has leisure to protest against a fatal isolation of the province of religion from those of morality, culture, science, and art. Previously he had protested against dethroning religion, the queen of the higher feelings, and establishing her as a maid-of-all-work to morality; now he declares religion not only to be no servant to, but actually the saviour of, art and morals. By linking man to the infinite, it guards against that besetting narrowness of view and interest which is the specialist's peril, making the connoisseur, outside his own sphere, a mere fledgling. The moral enthusiast may become a prig, the

humanity

religion  
humanity  
all others

philosopher of the Academy the fool of the Agora. Religion saves from such a fate, for, whilst each plays his own part, it supplies the full harmony. It cannot, therefore, be limited to one department—this is religious, this moral; as the unity of knowledge and action, the sense and taste for the Infinite, it pervades all. From this standpoint Schleiermacher does not hesitate to urge that it is therefore impossible to be moral or scientific without being religious. ‘You will find every truly learned man devout and pious’ says he—a remark which in itself is sufficient refutation of the allegation of a German critic that Schleiermacher makes religion a separate province of man’s life, merely one amongst many.

It will not be difficult to forecast what follows regarding dogma. It is evident that, upon the lines of such an analysis, it is not necessary to religion itself. Yet Schleiermacher admits its inevitability, seeing that men are bound to reflect upon their experience, and also (though this, in the light of views subsequently to be noticed, would be for him a lesser matter) to convey it to others. For these purposes it is necessary to clothe personal experience in dogmatic expressions.

In the *Glaubenslehre* Schleiermacher indicates the necessity of separating dogmatic and speculative theology, maintaining, as did Ritschl, a poor opinion of the latter. Here he asserts that dogmatic propositions have an ecclesiastical and a scientific value, and must be bound into a system. This does not alter the contention of the *Reden* that true piety is possible without their need or aid. Miracle, prophecy, revelation, and inspiration, even the

conceptions of God and immortality, are secondary not primary in religion, for, as the products of reflection upon feeling, everywhere are they antedated and out-weighed by the immediate feeling itself. Accordingly he expounds their significance in a broad sense, which will serve at once to illustrate his attitude towards dogma, and that around which dogma crystallizes. A miracle he understands to be an event seen from the religious standpoint ; prophecy the religious anticipation of one half of a religious event, the other being given ; inspiration, a spontaneous action of the heart regardless of external circumstances, expresses generally the feeling of true morality and freedom ; revelation is all that is original within : every intuition and primary feeling, every fresh insight and message of the Universe to man, is in the strictest sense a revelation. The man who, looking out from his watch-tower, sees in the world no miracle, hears no revelation within, is never inspired by a voice like Socrates' 'daimon' urging him, would be regarded by Schleiermacher as destitute of religion. The religious man recognizes the intrinsic purity of his feelings, their individuality and uniqueness.

To do so is essential, and all that is required for a true belief. To think another's thought or feel another's feeling is a bastard belief, hard and base. 'You must belong to yourselves.' To derive religion from a sacred writing, however glorious a monument of the past, is to try to draw life from 'a mausoleum.' Religion is unique, original feeling, and even the great ideas of God and immortality, to which Schleiermacher proceeds—for it would not be

possible wholly to omit treatment of such well-nigh universal accompaniments of religion—are, as being ideas, inevitably secondary to feeling.

The idea of God, as well as that of immortality, Schleiermacher treats as really pre-supposed in his argument, 'for only what is divine and immortal has room in which to speak of religion.'<sup>1</sup> Yet whilst God, as spiritual reality, is the basis of all true religion, the idea of God, as idea, must be secondary to feeling. A man possessing it may notwithstanding be wholly destitute of religion; or, on the contrary, the conceptions of another may be as crude as he himself is pious. That he proffers a godless creed Schleiermacher hotly denies. He does not, he says, represent religion without God, for feeling has been shown to be only of a religious character in so far as the particular object that excites it does not stand in and by itself, but in and by the great universal—God. To see through the individual thing to the Whole is to see God, and, if that be not granted, Schleiermacher throws down his brief, as a useless waste of time upon those thus shown to be in feeling and sentiment godless.

Tracing the development of the religious sense through the three stages at that time supposed to be the universal altar-stairs to God—fetishism, polytheism, and theism—Schleiermacher remarks that at the last stage the question of divine personality arises. For his own part fear of anthropomorphism and motives of reverence forbid its ascription to the Deity, at least in the usual manner. His own view of personality is not lofty, and in consequence it is

<sup>1</sup> *Reden*, Eng. trans., p. 93.

not surprising that he regards conscious personality as a term too limited to denote the Godhead : it draws Him into the region of antitheses. The acceptance of such an idea does not guarantee, nor its rejection forbid, the immediate presence of God in any man's feeling. To insist upon it is intolerance, the opposite of religion. He pleads that the matter be left to individual taste, suggesting that the two views are not necessarily diametrically opposed. If the conception of an impersonal God be deemed pantheistic, it is at least, he urges, neither materialistic Pantheism nor Atheism, for an impersonal God does not forbid a living God. In view of the difficulties, Schleiermacher, both here and in the *Glaubenslehre*, holds it better not to attribute personality to the Deity than to attribute it bristling with qualifications.

In this view of the feeling rather than the concept of God, Schleiermacher draws nearer to a land from which he is never far, yet one that he never definitely enters—Mysticism. With many similarities, Schleiermacher, none the less, is never wholly the mystic, pietist or quietist, in the devotional sense most commonly implied by the term, and his inspiration is drawn rather from an artistic idealism than Mysticism proper.

Concerning immortality, Schleiermacher contends rightly that it is a possession of the present rather than a concern for the future. In the midst of the finite to be one with the infinite, in every moment of time to dwell with the eternal, is immortality here and now. To do this is the aim of religion, and in proportion as it succeeds does it give immortality.

Yet Schleiermacher states this in a manner which makes it clear that it is attained at the expense of the individuality he has reasserted so strongly. For he regards individuality as constituted by each individual being a distinct aspect of the Whole, not by personality. Hence for him personality is merely limited selfhood, a resistance indeed to the Whole, and the desire to retain the limits of our present state. Thus the usual view of immortality, the desire to be ourselves hereafter as here, is irreligious, for religion expands the limited and definite outlines of the personality of the one by merging it in the All. To put it bluntly, religion persuades personality to commit suicide, and lose its unworthy self, till after the episode of death the process shall be complete, and personality annihilated—

Lost in the Godhead's deepest sea,  
And drowned in its immensity.

### § 3. *The Transmission of Religion ; the Church ; Historical Religions*

Schleiermacher's view of the propagation of religion, its accompaniments and historical manifestations, follows lines which his conception of the essence of religion involves. In the stringency of his restriction of religion to individual feeling, awakened by the action of the Universe upon the soul, he asserts that religion cannot be taught. It may be displayed, and thus possibly serve to arouse the religious sense in others, but the maximum of missionary effort that the essential, as distinct from the accidental in religion, will permit is so to let



your light shine that haply its reflection may stir others to kindle their unlit lamps. Even then, religion cannot be attached to the master who has awakened it; for, if it be truly religion, as soon as it springs into existence it springs into strict independence; and even though the disciple should yet fellow the master, he does not do so in religion itself, but rather in religious matters.

Schleiermacher regards every man as naturally endowed with religious capacity, and religion as a normal and spontaneous development. This capacity, however, is continually crushed out, and in characteristic Romantic style he inveighs against the prosaic literalism of the pedagogy of the time, ruthlessly choking every breath of imagination and wonder by the leaden hands of the worship of matter-of-fact. Religion is stifled by the habit of regarding things within the limits of our own interests, prejudices, and customs, instead of 'in the light of the Whole'—a conception probably suggested by Spinoza's *sub specie æternitatis*.

Three spheres are designated, out of which pathways leading upward to religion have been found; That within the Ego itself; that of external nature taken separately; that which unites both, and turns to both to perceive their unity—the sense of art. Religion which is not transferable from person to person may arise from each of these three spheres. From the first, by abstracting from self all that is not-self, the residue shrinks to a pin-point, and the less grows his personality the more does the Universe dawn upon man. In such manner, by abstract self-contemplation, the ancient Oriental mystics



found the universe. From the second, the particular leads to the study of the Universal which stands over and against it, whereby it subsists. By this process, however dimly realized, arose the nature-religions. The third, though originating no historical religion, has ornamented both of the previous types by its touch, as Plato adorned Hellenic religion with his myths. Art and religion are sisters, but they do not, Schleiermacher laments, recognize the relationship, and it is fresh witness to the aristocratic-academic view of religion which possessed him that he looks to art for a revival of religion.

The place of the Church in religion is fixed. By reason of the nature of man, not less than because of its own nature, religion must be social. But Schleiermacher distinguishes between the Church as the Communion of the Religious, and the actual outward organization. The former is a company of those initiated in true piety, who look upon life from this point of view. In their communion there is neither priest nor layman, but a republic of saints, who discuss religion in the only fitting manner, not with the irreverent handling of casual conversation, but with poetic skill and rhetoric, for that most sacred occupation religious intercourse demands the highest powers of language. A dubious doctrine indeed, that makes the florid imagery of the Romanticist a vehicle of sacred truth more worthy than the peasant's patois! It is in extravagances like these, uncorrected even by his later judgement, that the predispositions of Schleiermacher's youthful sympathies are revealed. It might well have been expected, even upon his own principles, that sim-

plicity and directness should better enunciate religious speech than the pompous periods of the orator. Such a society 'has nothing to do directly with the profane world' moreover. It can only come into contact with it if some individual member of this supreme hierarchy should descend amongst the common people and display his higher feelings, as a peacock his tail, for their admiration and attraction. Thus, though propagandist work is neither contemplated by nor required of the society of the superior, a novice may be led to desire to join it.

Lest, however, this true Church should fail to purify the world, and also should be threatened with extinction from the lack of new blood, it may touch life indirectly, through an intermediary, which, not of it, is also not wholly of the world. The actual Church serves as such, and may therefore be tolerated, even encouraged, as a nursing-ground and preparatory school for beginners in religion. Nevertheless, for her defects the inward and truly religious Church cannot be made responsible. Even when Schleiermacher turns to a criticism of them it is with a wail of disgust: 'I must also condescend upon a mass of earthly and worldly things.' The strange sound of this display of Romanticist other-worldliness, unrepented even in the days when the writer held and justified without suspicion of hypocrisy a pre-eminent position in the Church, is witness to the distance that modern opinion has travelled from Schleiermacher. It is only fair, however, also to recall that the Church has travelled far from the sterile formalities against which he was

so sturdy a protestant. It is also of interest to notice that Schleiermacher blames the alliance of Church and State for much of the evil he deplores, as well as for the restriction of the priesthood to a duly authorized body, instead of its pertaining to all holy and priestly souls. This is quite congruous with his fundamental theory, but that he should prove so ardent a liberationist testifies to a strong political interest which is not altogether connected with it. Finally, Schleiermacher suggests that ultimately the Church may merge into the family, which may well provide the full and successful preparation for the religious life.

The multiplicity of religions Schleiermacher regards as necessary. An infinite force divides itself into a number of distinct and characteristic forms; hence religion can only be fully manifested by such multiplicity as the positive religions reveal. Each contains some residue of the true essence of religion, though more or less buried under the accretion of time and man's device. Natural religion, however, he regards as overrated, being so overlaid with metaphysical and moral graces that in it little of the true essence is manifested. The protest against disparaging positive religions and patronizing natural religion, which is often of highly artificial manufacture, is not without ground. For, as Schleiermacher asserts, natural religion lacks definite characteristics. It is a poesy touched with philosophy and science, rather than a life warm from the touch of personal experience.

Schleiermacher fails, however, to realize the importance of the historical relationships of the positive

religions, dismissing them in favour of a view that the characteristic feature of each is that it tends to emphasize some particular aspect, to which the rest of religion's content is related. For example, the root-idea of Judaism is that of recompense, of Christianity corruption and redemption, hostility and mediation. The whole of religion is the sum-total of all the ways in which man can be related to God ; the fundamental idea of each positive religion is a part of this eternal whole, and therefore in itself eternal.

Throughout the whole of Schleiermacher's treatment of this subject a certain vein of contradiction runs, originating without doubt in the difference already noticed between his theory and practice. Schleiermacher's religious man is 'faultily faultless' and altogether too perfect to do anything. Wrapped in the aesthetic enjoyment of his higher feelings, he is enthroned on his Olympus in cool and detached serenity. Yet it is asserted that this artist is justified in placing himself within one of the positive religions and outward Churches to which he is so vastly superior. This saving clause, though somewhat inconsequently, is designed to provide in practice an outlet for activity which the strict theory does not, and logically cannot, afford.

Schleiermacher's classification of religions is now only of historical interest, and may be left aside. The same might be said of the conception, noticed above, of each religion witnessing to one fundamental idea.<sup>1</sup> It bears plainly the marks of that

<sup>1</sup> It will be remembered that Hegel develops a similar conception.

vague generalizing which, until the rise within recent years of the comparative method scientifically applied, served for a science of religions, and is more notable for its tolerance than significance. In an age when religions were commonly and with much simplicity classed on the bases 'true' and 'false' Schleiermacher's insight is refreshing.

§ 4. *The Contribution of Schleiermacher to Religious Philosophy*

Such, in outline, was the first systematic attempt to estimate, from a scientific standpoint, the nature of religion. Soon enough the pioneer's records are broken, his theories outdated, his work eclipsed; but he remains, and is high on the roll of honour when the men who outstripped him are forgotten. He led the way: they cannot take his crown. Whatever may or may not remain of Schleiermacher's contentions, the *Reden* will yet be the philosophical Magna Charta of the independence of religion.

No estimate of Schleiermacher's work can be correct which does not remember its conditions. He strives to reinstate a forgotten fact, and as the artist expresses the central conception of his picture, by his art revealing it with an emphasis not exhibited in nature, so Schleiermacher throws on the canvas a portrait of religion where feeling dominates even to the exclusion of other constituents of the subject. He bombards a prosaically practical age with its claims; feeling was the object of his search in his analysis, and, if he has not given due attention to what else is to be found, an analyst who seeks

some particular product in a mass of ore is not censured if, having discovered it, he does not continue the analysis further.

There are other reasons which make it needful to read Schleiermacher with some reservations. The *Reden* was the work of a young man, who, though a minister of the Church, was moving in an atmosphere of artistic and literary surroundings which perplexed and shocked the orthodox. It was written in a style deliberately chosen for its artistic effect rather than its scientific precision—the rhetorical.<sup>1</sup> It was addressed to ‘cultured despisers’ as a provocative challenge in what Schleiermacher held to be wellnigh a forlorn hope of setting aside a foregone judgement. It was also intended as a paradox to rouse the equally foregone judgement of those to whom religion was a code of morals, or a string of dogmas. It is both unwise and unfair to attach a literally prosaic rendering to the challenge of a young free-lance under such conditions. The book must stand for its principles and spirit rather than its side-issues. The rather elaborate and sometimes halting explanations added by the author in later life, when his position in the Church made his earlier masterpiece look strange by contrast, witness, perhaps, more strongly to this fact than anything else. The value of the *Reden* will be enhanced rather than impaired by understanding it in the light of such considerations.

It must also be remembered that Schleiermacher

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Adams Brown, *Essence of Christianity*, p. 160. ‘Songs rather than arguments; prose poems,’ says Dr. Brown.



admits the need of a fixed religious abode, and, in harmony with his suggestion that each positive religion stands for some fundamental idea, allows each man, without detriment, to throw in his lot with the religion which groups itself round the particular relation of God and man uppermost in his own personal revelation. For himself Christianity supplied the positive form, a conviction to which his subsequent writings bear witness increasingly. In the *Reden* Christianity is *primus inter pares*, not more, and Christ one of many mediators. In later life, however, he regarded progress in religion as the completion of, but not an addition to, the Christian revelation, and Christ, already the possessor of the true consciousness of the one God, as the one Mediator between God and man.

This will acquit Schleiermacher personally of the charge of failing to realize the importance of the sense of sin, but it will not alter the fact that he allowed the *Reden* to continue without emendation upon that point. Its analysis will therefore remain abnormal and one-sided in this aspect, as well as in others, and it must be judged of value for its truth in certain respects rather than on account of any claim to completeness.

Yet, whilst it is impossible to-day to underwrite the position of Schleiermacher in its entirety, its strength remains. Religion, as he insists, is an immediate contact of the soul with God, and if we could penetrate into the innermost room of the soul of every man with religious convictions, this, usually far more keenly felt than thought, would be ever found the vital force of religion.

When Schleiermacher attempts more specifically to define that contact, he, and for matter of that all who do so, must enter on debatable ground, where the manifold differences of thought, expression, doctrine, and temperament are revealed. The core of religion is an immediate personal experience, but once describe it, even so vaguely as to call it immediate contact of the soul and God, those three nouns and an adjective will give fighting ground which volumes of apologetics may not cover. The innermost essence of religion is so closely personal that its fullness is only personally felt. When it is analysed in thought and specified in language the question becomes one of approximation only.

The peculiar psychological analysis by which Schleiermacher endeavours to reach the distinctive sphere of religion makes it clear that he does not employ the term 'feeling,' as sometimes it is assumed that he does, in a usage common to-day ; that is to say, as equivalent to undefined emotion which issues in acts and beliefs of a religious nature. For him, primarily, feeling stands for the unity of consciousness<sup>1</sup> in which the opposition of knowledge on the one hand, and activity or will on the other, is removed, knowledge passing through feeling to will, and will through feeling to knowledge, the common relation to feeling forming the bond of connexion between the two. The sphere of religion, therefore,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Caldecott and Mackintosh : *Selections from the Literature of Theism*, p. 267, footnote. 'Evidently modelled,' says Dr. Mackintosh, 'on what he supposes to take place at the awakening of human consciousness.'



is found in this unifying element, and hence there is that which needs only recognition to be religion, in the breast of every man. This is manifestly different from the modern sense in which feeling is utilized as a convenient term descriptive of the emotional sense of the religion of the religious. On the other hand, it is true that since this original source of religion is so abstractly conceived and stated as to be theoretically useful only, Schleiermacher in practice goes beyond the modern usage in endeavouring to stamp with a religious character all 'healthy' feeling whatsoever.

A certain ambiguity, therefore, attaches itself to Schleiermacher's use of the term feeling. It represents the unity of consciousness primarily, whence feeling and intuition emerge. Gradually, as comparison of the earlier and later editions of the *Reden* shows, intuition falls into the background, and feeling becomes prominent. In the second place, feeling is used quite apart from this somewhat technical sense, and in the usual connotation of the term, it is lauded as religious.

Psychologists must be left to state how far it is correct to designate the unity of the ego as 'feeling.' Without forestalling this judgement, it may be anticipated that it will not be entirely favourable. There seems no doubt that the first sense in which the term feeling is used was Schleiermacher's original object of search. The second develops from it, partly because of the urgent need of more concrete characterization. To posit feeling as the matrix of religion accorded with the emotional and spiritual experiences of Schleiermacher's nature, and harmon-

ized with his Romanticist sympathies. But beside these practical considerations a theoretical need came into play in leading Schleiermacher to identify the unity of consciousness with feeling. This was because, as it has been stated, it served as a bridge to relate the metaphysical conception of the Deity as the unity of all—a conception which bears a reminiscence of Spinoza—to the individual experience.

Such primarily is the use made of the term feeling. It then passes over into the second signification, though not without an admission which, in the light of the subsequent wholesale connexion between healthy feeling and religion, sounds strangely. Fear is not the origin of religion, nor is the act of nature a religious feeling. Moreover, 'that joy in nature which so many extol is just as little truly religious.'<sup>1</sup> Schleiermacher will only contemplate as religious the sense of the Whole given to the true seer who recognizes it partially manifested in natural laws. This may be possible so long as Schleiermacher restricts feeling to the first meaning, but there being no conceivable reason for labelling awe, much less joy, 'diseased or impaired,' it little becomes the second meaning, and reveals not only the difficulties of the analysis, but a certain mental separation between the two aspects.

Schleiermacher arrives at the second signification by simply converting the proposition 'religion is feeling' and stating 'feeling is religion.' That feeling in the religious sense only, mystical stirrings and ecstatic emotion, is not to be understood by

<sup>1</sup> *Reden*, Eng. trans., p. 65.

this is evident when organic sensation is definitely mentioned by the assertion that 'there is no sensation that is not pious, except it indicate some diseased and impaired state of the life.'<sup>1</sup> An explanatory statement suggests that, for example, the sexual attraction of wedded life is not inconsistent with piety. But to be not inconsistent with it is not to constitute. Schleiermacher would disallow the piety of such attraction in unwedded life, for religious feeling must be 'not inconsistent with morality.' Ethics, and, if 'diseased' is to be taken literally, pathology, are thus constituted a court of appeal to determine the healthy or unhealthy—that is the religious or non-religious—character of the feelings. Surely this is to throw to the wolves the whole of Schleiermacher's argument regarding the immediacy and independence of religion! Further, the safeguard is as futile as inconsistent. Moral and immoral feelings do not differ as feeling, but only in motive and will, things which are not of account on Schleiermacher's principles. Physiologically the feelings of disease and lust are as truly feeling as those of health and pure desire. The proviso does more credit to Schleiermacher's heart than to his head, for the whole doctrine he expounds makes it utterly impossible to pick and choose amongst the feelings, especially on the strength of a shifting criterion like the prevailing code of morals. The result makes it impossible to retain both the position feeling is religion, and the definition of religion as Schleiermacher understands it.

<sup>1</sup> *Reden*, Eng. trans., p. 46, cf. p. 105.

Apart from this, moreover, to treat all healthy feeling as religious even though it be added that it is so, not because therein a single object affects us, but in so far as it affects us as a revelation of the Whole, leads into such an *impasse* of paradoxes that the more appreciative of Schleiermacher's expositors ignore it and concentrate upon the former aspect of the term. I am unable to regard this course as justified, but since a strict interpretation involves countless absurdities too manifest to need mention, and too palpable to need serious refutation, it seems fairer to the author to regard his contentions at this point as merely a bold extravagance to attract attention to the neglected importance of feeling in religion.

Elsewhere Schleiermacher endeavours to supplement this contention by insisting that all immediate feeling is true, and is only obscured when reflection upon it has supervened. This is undeniable, but it does not carry us far. All our immediate experience presents itself as true, but only after reflection, comparison, and interpretation can it be adjudged true in the more strict sense, that of validated, not merely claimed, truths. Feeling, undoubtedly 'true' in the first sense, means nothing until it is established in the second sense, and in being thus established it is carried necessarily into the region Schleiermacher distrusts.

Lest the criticism should become unduly laboured, one more point must suffice. By jumbling together spiritual feeling and organic sensation the distinctive place of religion is lost, just when Schleiermacher is most anxious to secure it. Though difficult to

describe, religious emotion frequently is accompanied by vivid consciousness, where organic feeling has little or none. Religious emotion and organic sensation, whilst both are feeling, are qualitatively distinct, and cannot be indiscriminately herded. Schleiermacher's own personal religious experience was real and intense. He defines it as feeling, and feeling it is; but notwithstanding distinctively religious feeling declares itself unique, and it is strange that one who experienced it could parallel or class it with lower feelings, akin in kind but distinct in character.

Schleiermacher's error must be considered to be, not the association of religion and feeling, but the unfortunate identification of religious feeling with a psychological postulate—that the unity of the ego is feeling and the junction of the divine and the human, and subsequently with organic sensation. No organic aristocracy makes the reasoning-process physiologically superior to the feeling-process. Though human prejudice, leaning to that which man possesses and the brutes do not, rather than the common ground of all sentient creation, may relegate feeling to the basement and invite reason to the parlour, the one is intrinsically as human and as worthy as the other. Religion may spring from a thing so lowly ('ungenteel' seems the word) as feeling. So far Schleiermacher's contention is healthy and necessary, but it is impossible not to regard his specifications as unfortunate.

Matters are not mended by a subsequent and more definite declaration, in the *Glaubenslehre*, for

‘the feeling of dependence.’<sup>1</sup> The development may be logical, but it is vitiated by faulty premisses. The isolation of feeling from will and thought, which is known as impossible by modern psychology, formed the initial error, leading naturally to the conception of a religion of passivity. The roots of religion are deep in the soil of feeling ; its clay binds every truly religious experience. But rigorously to limit religion to feeling, excluding all else, even that ‘will to believe’ which is often the most intense part of the experience of religion, is so patently incompatible with the facts that criticism becomes a work of supererogation. The soul’s relation to God is essentially reciprocal, but the increase of dependence implies the diminishing of the power of realizing that dependence. When Schleiermacher talks of ‘absolute dependence’ he is speaking of that which, strictly, involves the utter absence of any such power at all. The feeling of *absolute* dependence is really a contradictory expression, for whereas partial dependence might be felt as such, absolute dependence would simply *be*, but to *feel* it would involve a separation impossible *ex hypothesi*. Schleiermacher’s definition therefore takes the paradoxical course of implying that the deepening of religion tends to the loss of religious sensibility, a contradiction which the service he rendered in restoring the religious importance of feeling may partially, but not entirely, condone.

<sup>1</sup> Hegel’s sarcastic comment that upon this showing Schleiermacher’s dog would be more pious than his master is not without point, but is rather too summary to be taken seriously.



With a sound instinct Schleiermacher chose the starting-point of religious experience, and proceeded by a psychological method. The basis upon which he built sweeping generalizations was, however, surprisingly narrow. In keeping with Romanticist prejudices, and a view of religion which interests itself solely with a few virtuosos, he appeals only to the experience of the trained, educated, and cultured. The separation of a little company of religious connoisseurs from the inferior masses of the religious is neither healthy nor justifiable. The dedication of the *Reden* may explain, but does not pardon, this truly Greek contempt for the multitude in a matter in which their experience is well to be weighed, for it is impossible to build a scientific account of religion by the psychological method, if but so limited a part of the groundwork of religious experience is covered. The significant fact, however, is the choice of this basis and method. A discoverer is seldom able to make more than a scanty use of the possibilities of his discovery, whilst later investigators, working upon his lines, surpass his applications but utilize more completely his results. Such has been the case with the pioneer of the modern psychological investigation of religion.

A further contribution of Schleiermacher to religious philosophy was the definite individualism which, in contrast to the trend of the time, marked his views. The century was individualistic, but dealt with the individual collectively. Schleiermacher treats the individual simply, a unit in himself and a separate manifestation of the infinity of the Infinite. In each man who has attained the true

inwardness of religion he sees a mirror of the Whole. He would have paralleled Dr. Ward's maxim, 'as many worlds as minds,' by saying 'as many religions as minds.' Just as the infinite force of religion expresses itself in the positive religions, so may it in individuals. This, as Schleiermacher does not fail to see, involves no incompatibility with the individual's adherence to one of the outward religions, adding that, since revelation is never trivial nor solely personal, but rests upon something great and common, the founder of a religion is never without followers of like convictions. To belong with the majority to an existing form does not betray custom or convention only, but rather a common determination by higher causes. No man's religion is less characteristically his, because similar experiences exist.

Up to this point Schleiermacher's individualism is sound and sane. Every healthy person has in his nature common ground with others. It is not otherwise in religion. The man who has nothing in common with his fellows, could he be found, would be a madman; the absolutely singular religion is likewise an aberration, not a revelation. There is no need to recoil from the subjectivity of religion understood from Schleiermacher's standpoint. In other respects, however, Schleiermacher's individualism is not deserving of the meed of praise his expositors have often bestowed upon it. Without question, it is one departure in the right direction from the strong influence of Spinoza, which Schleiermacher felt more than he admitted or perhaps realized. On the other hand, it is in two



respects at least unsatisfactory. That a considerable individualism is necessary to a theory which bases religion upon feeling is patent: furthermore the training of Schleiermacher amongst the Romanticists would foster its development. None the less its final breakdown irresistibly suggests that it was not a basal conviction of his mind.

Schleiermacher places religion within the most subjective of all the provinces of man's nature, feeling. Since there is no universal feeling to which appeal can be made, the religion of feeling must in some sense of the term be an individual matter. So far the ground under his feet is firm, but after this the basis of his individualism begins to crumble.

In the first place, because of the insistence upon feeling alone as the essence of religion. The faulty psychology which in an illegitimate manner separates feeling from thought and will, in itself constitutes an impassable barrier to a consistent individualism; for, though feeling is subjective, it is will that cuts out most sharply the boundaries of the individual, and feeling without will, whilst it may technically constitute individuality, is incapable of expressing it. The definition of religion as the feeling of absolute dependence surrenders the last hope of reclaiming the position, and had Schleiermacher fully worked out the consequences of this definition, comparing them with the results of the *Reden*, it is not easy to see how they could have been reconciled with the doctrine of individuality there maintained.

Secondly, and still more clearly, the separation of individuality and personality is fatal. For Schleier-

macher the individuality of a man is like that of a religion, the expression of one ray of the spectrum of the Whole. Its apotheosis is to blend itself with the rest, where, though in a sense it is retained as an essential constituent of the Whole, it is more truly said to be lost. It is not personality which for him makes individuality. Personality is a diminishing quantity in religion, for religion increasing 'expands,' which evidently means blurs, it, and its sharply cut outlines are filled in. 'Would they but strive,' he exclaims, 'to annihilate their personality and to live in the one and in the all!' It is true that each individual, being an eternal manifestation of God—a thought that forcibly suggests the 'modes' of Spinoza—as such remains; but an individuality that loses its personality, whether the separation is technically possible or not, must assuredly cease to be an individuality in any sense that has meaning or interest for us. Schleiermacher realizes that personality as we know it is incomplete, and that the man who transcends its bounds, 'loses little when he loses himself'; but he does not realize that whoso loseth his personality shall find it, that personality is more than an impervious fact, it is a boundless ideal, and that in going beyond it we do not cast it off, but enter more fully into it. Schleiermacher's view of personality is narrow and limited, and it reacts, breaking down his individualism, for it is impossible to regard him as not ultimately lapsing, at least partially, into Spinozism. Had Schleiermacher understood the critical importance to religion of a definite doctrine of freedom he would have been led to a clearer insight into the significance of

personality. Freedom, however, he regards as a matter for morality, but of indifference to religion. Had it not been so it might have become evident to him that for any true conception of freedom it is necessary to regard the individual, not merely as a mode or manifestation of God, but as a personal centre of determinative power without, that is outside of, God (using these spatial terms, of course, metaphorically). From this side, however, as from others, the prepossessions of Schleiermacher's theory debar him from an individualism finally consistent or satisfactory.

A defective conception of individuality is as surely followed by a defective conception of God as lightning by thunder. It would be unfair to charge Schleiermacher with Pantheism. Yet all philosophy struggles with what Professor Pringle-Pattison graphically describes as 'the almost insuperable difficulty of finding room in the universe for God and man.' The pitfall of philosophies that emphasize the human in its dependence on the divine is Pantheism; that of those which emphasize the human in its independence of the divine is Deism. Schleiermacher's does not by any means escape its peculiar snare, more especially since he regards God as not properly to be called personal, and identifies the Deity with the unity of the universe. Schleiermacher's view implies *Sine Deo nullus mundus, sine mundo nullus Deus*, and is distinctly lacking in adequate appreciation of the transcendence of God. Both features are characteristic of Pantheism. It is not the limited individuality recognized in the *Reden* that

saves Schleiermacher from the charge, but rather the convictions revealed elsewhere in his life and more definitely Christian teaching. The Deity of the *Reden* is an artist's ideal, somewhat mystical, more pantheistic, and it must be said, slightly artificial.

No criticism, however, can annul the great assets of Schleiermacher's work. They are, firstly, the establishment of religion in its own definite and free sphere, which, though not without qualification, is in feeling, for, after giving due place to thought and will, the predominance of feeling remains. Secondly, the insistence upon the inward and spiritual character of religion, as a thing in itself, independent of the doctrines which express its beliefs, the Churches which express its social aspect, and the morality it inculcates. These things may be to-day a commonplace, they may have been understood previously; but to Schleiermacher's age the *Reden* came as a revelation, breaking down the intellectualism which made religion a matter of logic, the ethicalism which reduced it to a compendium of moral rules for the use of the vulgar, the dogmatism which limited it to the subscription to authorized belief. Before Schleiermacher's time the independence and inwardness of religion were known to few save the mystics; since his day they cannot be lost. The Moravian influence did more than create, through Wesley, a revival of religion: it created through Schleiermacher a revival of religious philosophy, for the Evangelical Revival and the new epoch heralded by Schleiermacher may justly be regarded as two sides of one and the same fact.

Much as this represents, still more value is to be found in the influence of Schleiermacher's thought. Its outward form has perished, its inward spirit is renewed day by day in the religious philosophy of the present time. What he taught the early part of the nineteenth century is not only unforgettable, but now perhaps for the first time properly understood and appreciated. Partly through Lotze, and again through Ritschl, the influence of Schleiermacher, even if more indirectly than directly, has passed into British thought, and its potency is not to be denied. Especially will it be found that in the philosophy that arises from the psychology of religious experience, a line runs direct, through many junctions of converging tracks, to the fervent speculation of Schleiermacher.

## CHAPTER II

### PERSONAL MONISM : LOTZE

#### § 1. *The Place of Lotze in Religious Philosophy*

THE present condition of philosophical opinion invests with a peculiar interest the name of Hermann Lotze, in that now, a generation after his death, the influence of his thought, especially in religious philosophy, is manifestly increasing. A brilliant thinker, of an intellectual versatility that is rare in a people tending so distinctively as the Germans to specialization, Lotze was equally facile in his comprehension of natural, particularly physiological, science, and philosophical, particularly metaphysical, speculation. Though bearing the marks of his predecessors' influence, there is sufficient independence in his investigations to forbid any attempt to classify him as the definite product of any one school. He has himself provided some account of his principal mentors ; and, whilst repudiating the coupling of his philosophy with that of Herbart, confesses to lessons gained from Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. It is Weisse, however, and the elder Fichte who are named as his chief teachers, with obligations, which are manifest, to Leibnitz.

Lotze's strength lay in criticism. Nowhere is

the acuteness of his insight more manifested. By it the construction of his positive philosophy was built up, and a trenchant polemic, directed especially against the Hegelians, wove itself into the main fabric of his conclusions. This may be not unconnected with the fact that he has left no school behind him. Not immediately and directly, that is to say, for none the less his pupils are many, and at the present time it may not seem a rash prophecy to forecast that Lotze, whose influence in England and America is greater even than in Germany, will become for British philosophy what, some while back, Hegel was. Certainly few thinkers have contributed more to the modern phase of religious philosophy than he, and to psychology also he has rendered services which will not soon be forgotten.

Lotze's death in 1881 at the age of sixty-four cut short a career of strenuous search for knowledge in many fields. Student of Leipsic and professor at Göttingen, the academic interest was strongly marked in his life; but his breadth of view was never constituted by the walls of the lecture-room. The *Mikrokosmos*, published in three volumes, 1856-64, and the brief *Outlines of the Philosophy of Religion*, the dictated portions of his lectures, bear more directly upon his religious philosophy; but its roots are fixed firmly in his other work, particularly in his metaphysics and logic. It is not possible to consider Lotze's philosophy of religion apart from its metaphysical groundwork, notwithstanding that the chief factor of his contribution, the argument for Divine Personality, is far more prominently employed by those who decline the



proffered foothold of metaphysics than by those who see in its intricacies a ladder to the heavenly places.

In general, Lotze's system may be described as a spiritual Realism ; and despite the fact that it is, negatively, a criticism of Idealism, its development was of an idealistic character. In order, however, to fix upon the chief asset that he has provided for religious philosophy, the heading ' Personal Monism ' has been here adopted to denote his place amongst these types of thought, and upon this aspect the weight of attention is concentrated.

## § 2. *The Metaphysical Basis of Lotze's Religious Philosophy*

The key to Lotze's leading conclusions in religious philosophy, as well as to much else in his thought, must be cut from his metaphysical conceptions. A brief outline of these becomes necessary, therefore, in order to lay bare the point at which metaphysical theory branches off into religious philosophy in a bold attempt to solve the antithesis of Monism and Pluralism, to unite realistic and idealistic conceptions, and subsequently to apportion both to faith and to knowledge their rightful and proper spheres. Lotze's metaphysic rises out of ontology, explaining that ' to be ' can only mean ' to stand in relations.' Taking what is regarded as the natural view, that of a plurality of real things external to ourselves as the subjects of relations, Lotze is concerned to show that the interaction of any one thing with another must imply an underlying unity. If things

are conceived as in themselves entirely independent, self-subsistent, and self-sufficient, interaction between them becomes impossible, and reciprocal relations incomprehensible. Hence it becomes necessary to modify this conception, and to regard these subjects of relations as not rigidly separate or really isolated, but as enclosed within and linked together by a medium in which they subsist. 'Our earlier idea, therefore, of manifold original essences, unconditionally existing and of independent content . . . passes into a different idea, that of manifold elements of which the existence and content is throughout conditioned by the nature and reality of the one existence of which they are organic members.'<sup>1</sup> That is to say, if M (to employ Lotze's symbols) be the unity, and A and B single things, the 'transeunt' operation of A upon B is actually the immanent operation of M upon M : in short, all action, usually regarded as of things upon things, is in reality the immanent action of the substantial unity M in and on itself.

The nature of 'things' has hitherto been estimated from the standpoint of the ordinary common-sense realism, which regards sensible properties as forming their content. Lotze, however, separates with Kant, though from a different standpoint, the Thing-in-itself (subsequently denoted as Things with a capital T) from things, or phenomena. The latter he regards not as self-existent, and copied by our mental representations, but as dependent upon their apprehension by spirits. Without such apprehension they do not exist. At the same time they

<sup>1</sup> *Metaphysic*, Eng. trans., § 70.

are not mere subjective fantasies of the brain that apprehends them, but are due to the influence and action of Things upon our spirits. Yet phenomena are not the manifestation of the Things themselves, but results which depend alike upon the nature of the Things which exercise and the spirits which receive the influence. It follows that only a formal cognition of the Real Being of Things which produce within us the impressions known as phenomena, and are yet dissimilar from them, is possible ; for though Things produce phenomena they do so only in so far as they are media by which our spirits are affected to apprehend what we know as phenomena, and are not in themselves, in any direct way, represented by that for which they are responsible.

Can the nature of Things, therefore, be represented in any way ? It is evident that *ex hypothesi* they are capable of acting and being acted upon, and also that amidst their changing states they must, in order to retain any semblance of selfhood or identity, be possessed with a certain unity.

With that careful enumeration of possibilities characteristic of all Lotze's work, explanations which would regard them as qualities, as laws, as formless substratum (*ὕλη*) are rejected. For Lotze, the only possible way in which they can be understood is by appeal to our own spirit or ego. There we find, in our living experience, an independent and sole personality in contrast with its particular excitations and states. There is a unity in the midst of variety ; there, affections and actions in the true sense of the terms, i.e. as felt and willed,

not the mere unconscious results of causation. The ego, therefore, supplies all the characteristics necessary for the conception of Things, and intelligibly to explain their reality, that is to say, their being, unity, and states, Lotze has no hesitation in invoking the analogy of our own spirits, and regarding Things as spiritual beings. 'If there are to be things with the properties we demand of things, they must be more than things. Only by sharing this character of the spiritual nature can they fulfil the general requirements which must be fulfilled in order to constitute a Thing. They can only be distinct from their states if they distinguish themselves from their states; they can only be unities if they oppose themselves as such to the multiplicity of their states.'<sup>1</sup>

Things, then, are of spiritual nature, but this does not, according to Lotze, involve more than that they should share in the characteristic of a spiritual life, namely, to exist as objects for themselves, not for something else, a requirement that could be fulfilled merely by possessing the capacity of experiencing feelings of pleasure or pain. Further, since the psychical life of Things is a requirement of reasoning rather than a fact that can be observed, no practical consequences depend upon it.

In viewing Things as spiritual or soul-like monads, Lotze approaches Leibnitz, to depart from him, however, in the conception of the Unity by which Things are interrelated. He regards two points only as essential: the one being the existence of spiritual beings, like ourselves, as centres of unity

<sup>1</sup> *Metaphysic*, Eng. trans., § 96.

and permanent subjects, the other being the all-embracing Unity in which these subjects exist. If these be safeguarded, he expresses his willingness to leave it as a matter of indifference whether, as he has it, Things are interposed as the media through which our spirits are affected, or whether phenomena are regarded as directly presented by the action of the Creative Power. So far as the intelligibility of the world is concerned the matter is not important, but if Things are postulated, the notion of a Thing without a self, an unknown possibility wellnigh unthinkable, cannot, according to Lotze, be preferred to the notion of Things as selves. It may be admitted that it is not necessary to assume that Things must have an existence after the analogy of our own; yet, if all the characteristics of animate existence are to be excluded, no other characterization or manner of being can be predicated. Then, finally, on the supposition of Things without selves, there is no need that they should exist 'outside' the infinite Unity; but on Lotze's showing, although they interact only in and through this infinite Unity, Things, and, for matter of that, naturally spirits also, in so far as they are objects for themselves, are to be regarded as 'outside' it.

The spirituality of Things involves the spiritual character of the infinite Principle upon which they depend, for spiritual processes cannot be derived from a material Principle. It would be technically possible, as Lotze shows, to separate the material and spiritual; but if the spiritual can account for that which appears as material, it is unnecessary to resort to such dualism. If the Principle be

characterized as ‘*per se* unconscious’ it is meaningless, for if reason be abstracted from consciousness, nothing intelligible remains ; it is also unprovable by appeal to the facts of the case, and the unconscious is no more capable of producing self-conscious reason than the material can produce the spiritual. An appeal may, it is true, be made to rational effects unconsciously and instinctively produced by us for an analogy, but the analogy breaks down when it is remembered that we are normally self-conscious, and such effects are preceded by consciousness, all of which is inapplicable to Unconscious Will. For such reasons Lotze dispenses with the attempt to denote the World-Principle as either material or unconscious, and decides to regard it as spirit.

Such, scantily outlined, is the metaphysical basis of Lotze’s religious philosophy. It is of a nature upon which much criticism might cluster. It may be alleged that an unbridged rift has been blasted between Things and phenomena ; or suggested that the inference of a Unity from the fact that Things cannot be self-dependent is a verbal if not an actual contradiction of the subsequent declaration of their partial independence ; or asked how far, on Lotze’s principles, the soul which supplies an analogy for the conception of Things can itself be an object of knowledge. These matters have been amply discussed, however, by Lotze’s critics, and to enter into them again would not in any way assist in the accomplishment of the present purpose. The concern of the time being is to notice that, simply by identifying the Unity, the formal M of the *Metaphysic*, with the Absolute or God

in the *Outlines of the Philosophy of Religion*, Lotze makes his metaphysical Things and Unity serve also as a religious conception of God and finite spirits.

The assumption of this identification at once leads Lotze from metaphysics to religion. The substantial 'ground' of the world is a spirit. All that is finite is its action. Actions which are permanently maintained are 'Real Beings,' and have a 'relative independence,' which may be denoted in a manner Lotze admits to be 'formally unsatisfactory' as 'outside' the Infinite. Things are the uniform action of the Infinite in all spirits, and because of their regularity and uniformity, appear as a world of existent things in space, 'outside' of the spirits to whom they are presented.

The Absolute, that is to say, is τὸ πᾶν. In it exists the world, as our ideas in us. Yet Things and spirits exist 'outside' the Infinite by the nature of their existence, for though products of the Absolute, they are always objects for themselves, and thus individuals. Yet all are bound up within the unity of the Absolute, and the 'transeunt' working of one being upon another is actually the immanent working of the one all-embracing Being within itself. The relation of spirits to the Absolute is thus similar to that of the spirit-like Things. There is none the less a distinction between Things and spirits, which will be manifest when it is remembered that, whilst allocating a spiritual character of a scanty kind only to Things, personality is ascribed to spirits; yet in that they are 'not the Absolute itself, but only modifications and frag-



ments of the same, and yet likewise possess all their existence only through this Absolute.’<sup>1</sup> Their personality is limited, and they remain in a relation to the Absolute that reminds one of a phrase of dogmatic theology, ‘eternal subordination.’

None the less, as real beings, they are constituted by an original independence being granted to certain actions of the Infinite. Further than this Lotze holds it useless to press. Questions concerning the why and wherefore of these original forms of the Infinite’s activity require answers wholly outside of our powers. Primary actuality exists, and philosophy seeks to explain its results, but not to show how it exists. That is to say, Lotze holds the creation of spirits by the Absolute as part of the data for explanation, a postulate from which thought must start, rather than a matter it must explain.

### § 3. *Value-judgements ; Ethical Basis of Metaphysics*

In the next chapter a conception developed from Lotze appears as a cardinal point of the religious philosophy of a highly influential school of theology. That conception, the value-judgement, occupies an indispensable position in Lotze’s philosophy, providing a pathway to reality, and effects a distinctive result, the basing of Metaphysics upon Ethics.

Reacting against the Hegelian identification of

<sup>1</sup> *Outlines of the Philosophy of Religion*, Ladd’s trans., § 41, p. 67.

reality and thought, Lotze adopts the opposite extreme, and so separates them that the function of thought is confined to the formal combination of the data of experience, the formal consistency of our ideas. He accepts the complete subjectivity of our knowledge, and refuses to admit that thought can afford any knowledge of real objects.

Some sequel must be expected. To stop here is to abandon the quest for reality, and stupefy the desire for truth with the anodynes of scepticism. Lotze, convinced of the impotence of thought, seeks elsewhere for immediate and self-evident truths, and, by way of a first step, finds that these characteristics are fulfilled in intuition, which is unanalysable and instantaneous, aesthetically though not logically necessary. The criterion of such truths has a Cartesian flavour—‘clearness and strength.’

This is sufficient to raise some hope of attaining to, but not to give, reality. Intuitions are still within the realm of ideas. They are also unsystematic, co-ordinated only by thought. Is there, then, any way from ideas to reality? If our ideas of things are not the things themselves, do they correspond to or represent them? That they do, Lotze is convinced, will not be shown by logical argument or dialectic process, but can only be assumed by an act of faith, faith that the world has meaning. ‘That the world cannot be a mere meaningless absurdity is a moral conviction, which is the ultimate ground of our belief in our capacity of cognizing the truth, and in the general possibility of scientific knowledge.’<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Microcosmus*, Eng. trans., vol. ii. p. 347.

Lotze's position, then, is this. Sensation and perception provide the material of thought, the working of thought is confined to this material, and produces what we recognize as knowledge. Yet sensations and their causes are unlike. Even intuition which gives immediate apprehension of objects does not give the Things behind the phenomena. Appearance is not reality, yet we are bound to assume that appearance is not wholly severed from, but rather is *proportional* to, reality; we are bound to judge objects to be in reality alike, or different, or similar, according as their impressions upon us are: 'To renounce this supposition would produce, not any increase of precision, but fruitless and self-contradictory agony of thought.'<sup>1</sup>

That is to say, Lotze thinks we are obliged to assume that our conscious life possesses meaning, or be condemned to utter confusion and stultification. Yet he has decided that thought cannot guarantee its meaning. Whence, then, is it to come? The answer is, from feeling. Feeling, says Lotze, accompanies our internal states, not as a casual and subsidiary effect, but as a regular and inseparable element. To what is and to what ought to be, feeling attaches *value* and thus introduces us immediately to the idea of the Good. The Good may be postulated by thought, but in feeling it is directly given. Here then is a way to reality. If the arguments of reason cannot guarantee the reality of our thought, there are arguments of a different nature which 'pass from the incontestable *value* of an object of thought to the belief in its

<sup>1</sup> *Microcosmus*, Eng. trans., vol. ii. p. 350.

reality.'<sup>1</sup> The Good *is*, for it is immediately and undeniably given in feeling. It is a fact, independent of our thought. It alone, therefore, may be said to have an absolute right to exist. Though we are not entitled to demand that our thought gives us reality, we can believe it is never without meaning, because the Good gives meaning to it, guaranteeing the validity of our thought, and the phenomena which form its data. Though thought is subjective, the Good gives to it a certain objectivity, in the assurance that it is not an empty and meaningless procession of ideas, but an ordered, coherent revelation and means by which the Highest Good becomes an object of enjoyment and blessedness for finite spirits. Thought, unable to grasp the manner of presentation, is nevertheless able to grasp the meaning of what is presented, and is likened to a spectator who, comprehending the meaning of the play, would gain no more by seeing the mechanism by which the scene-shifters change the spectacle.

Lotze marks out the two spheres of judgement distinctly. 'Two domains . . . are distinguished. We require, on the one hand, certain investigations concerning that which *exists*; and, on the other hand, concerning the *value* which we attach to what is actual or to what ought to be.'<sup>2</sup> The identification of the real and the Good, upon which it is clear that all depends, is assumed not argued, save for a couple of remarks. The first of these is to the effect that though value is subjectively given, an object

<sup>1</sup> *Logic*, Eng. trans., § 248.

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (Outlines of Logic)*, Eng. trans., § 4, p. 152.

of value is for the spirit which experiences it a real object. The second suggests that if an old antagonism (that of a good God and a demiurge) is to be avoided, the Good must be merged in the natural, or nature in the accomplishment of the Good. Deciding unhesitatingly for the latter alternative, Lotze admits it to be not theoretically demonstrable. 'To our human reason ■ chasm that cannot be filled, or at least has never yet been filled, divides *the world of values* from the world of forms. . . . With the firmest conviction of the undivided unity of the two we combine the most distinctly conscious belief in the impossibility of this unity being known.'<sup>1</sup>

Thus does Lotze, by use of the implications of the value-judgement, link the sundered realms of thought and reality, and stave off a threatened collapse into a scepticism which seems imminent in his doctrine of thought. What thought can only ask leave to take for granted, feeling, as he views it, supplies with unquestionable directness.

The conception of value provides, moreover, in doing this, a distinctive basis for metaphysics, denoted as ethical, though with what justification it must be asked later. Lotze remarks that Hegel calls that which is usually styled metaphysics, logic, with consistency, since he identified being and thinking. From his own standpoint, however, existence contains more than can be expressed in logical thinking, and logical thinking accordingly cannot guarantee itself. Rejecting the Hegelian equation of thought and being, he can find no other

<sup>1</sup> *Microcosmus*, Eng. trans., vol. i. pp. 396, 397.

guarantee of metaphysical suppositions than the idea of the Good, which provides them with a basis in ethics.

Finally, the conception of the value-judgement, and the use made of it, reveal the teleological character of Lotze's thought. Well acquainted with materialistic science, and adopting the mechanical view of natural functions, he none the less regards the mechanical course of nature as not possessed with independent reality, but as an expression of the will of God. For Lotze the world is essentially the instrument of purpose, and that purpose is the revelation of God to the finite spirits He has created.

#### § 4. *The Supreme Reality Personal*

Lotze's *Metaphysic* yielded a supreme Being, the basis of unity, together with the conclusion that reality could only be expressed in spiritual terms. Its foundation and guarantee lay in the idea of the Good. The association of these results gives the idea of God, the spiritual supreme Reality and Good. The next question to decide is whether or not personality is to be attributed to this Being.

To speak of 'impersonal spirit' Lotze regards as unwarranted. Whilst it is true that we may lose ourselves for a while in a sensation, idea, feeling or effort experienced by us, these occurrences are only known in connexion with personal spirits, and cannot prove their possibility apart from personality. It may also be urged that we attain personality, and inferred accordingly that the Absolute also does so, or, as some would have it, assumes it in the case

of its products, finite spirits. The first view Lotze scorns as 'speculative curiosity,' the second implies the paradox that the Absolute assumes in its products what it does not possess in itself. Neither, moreover, answers our religious needs, for Lotze has no hesitation in declaring that personality is the only form that the soul can even consider, in its desire to apprehend the reality of the highest good : much less will any other satisfy.

Lotze begins by an analysis of the conception of personality which yields two features. Personality, and for matter of that self-consciousness, implies that the subject possesses an image of cognition or representation of what it is, by means of which it distinguishes itself from others. Secondly, this image is fundamental and unique, and is not contrasted with any other image in the same way in which that other image may be contrasted with a third.

The knowledge of our personality may come by means of experience, but to speak as if we, arriving at a certain point of mental development, were compelled to consider one particular mental representation, not merely as different from another as that other differs from a third, but as the ego standing in opposition to every non-ego, is unintelligible. This so-called origin of self-consciousness always tacitly implies the existence of self-feeling, its most essential element.

Similarly Lotze dismisses the assertion that personality is occasioned by the ego's activity being 'reflected' back from the non-ego, as 'a mere supplement of thought devoid of all basis.' An



attempt may be made to show that the soul originally produces intuitive ideas only. The interaction of these ideas sets up conceptions of non-intuitive subjects to which the intuitive ideas form predicates ; and finally, by assigning one subject to the sum-total of all these inner states, manufactures an ego known at once as the subject and object of ideation.

Such a process would, however, not distinguish ' I ' from ' thou ' or ' he,' our own personality from that of others. This distinction is effected, not by pure ideation, but by the capability of experiencing feelings of pleasure and pain, and combining them with ideas. Such a combination enables us to distinguish the state in question as our own. The smallest capability for the experience of feeling is sufficient to distinguish the one who experiences it from the external world, but the highest intellectuality, apart from this capability, will not be able to apprehend itself as an ego over and against a non-ego. That is to say, once again, that personality pre-supposes self-feeling, and cannot be a subsequent intellectual construction only.

The foregoing characterization of personality is followed by the question proper of the personality of the Deity. Lotze adopts his critical-constructive procedure, and advances by facing successively the several objections that may be presented.

It is alleged, in the first place, that since an ego is only possible in contrast with a non-ego, to ascribe personality to God involves a dualism—God and an antithetical non-ego. Lotze goes behind the objection by pointing out that, if it be taken strictly, and the ego and non-ego are said to have no meaning in

themselves apart from their contrast, when the contrast arises no reason exists for designating the one more than the other ego or non-ego. 'Hence every being which is destined to take the part of the Ego when the contrast has arisen, must have the ground of its determination in that nature which it had *previous* to the contrast, although before the existence of the contrast it is not yet entitled to the predicate which in that contrast comes to belong to it.'<sup>1</sup> That ground of determination, as has been seen, is self-feeling, which differentiates so unmistakably the act of distinguishing self from not-self, from the act of distinguishing any two other objects. The conclusion follows that, whilst the ego can only be *thought* in contrast with the non-ego, it must exist independently of such relation. Otherwise the very relation itself would be impossible.

A further objection entrenches itself in the assertion that, though the ego may exist without an opposing non-ego, none the less a being capable of such self-existence could neither feel nor develop it apart from the influences of an external world, a non-ego that is to say. There is in the objection this much truth, Lotze admits, that though the forms of activity, content of sensation, and feelings of the ego belong to its inner nature, the stimuli which awaken them come from without. But an Infinite Being, the ground of the finite, is in no such case. Yet that is to be reckoned no detriment to His personality, for excitation by external stimuli is needful not for personality, but only for limited personality, having its existence from a definite

<sup>1</sup> *Microcosmus*, Eng. trans., vol. ii. p. 679.

point in time, and a determinate place in the system of the whole. The self-sufficiency of the Infinite Being dispenses with these conditions, since He contains within Himself the conditions of existence. Even with us, activity, if occasioned by external stimuli, can and does in the exercise of memory, imagination, and so forth, proceed without them, so that they form no *sine qua non* of personal activity, in its continuance at least.

What then, in the case of the Deity corresponds with the primary impulse needful for us? Lotze demurs and refuses to allow the question. Every explanation must start from some datum, or be allowed some postulate which is not matter to be explained, only whose issues concern our powers of elucidation. The materialist demands definite initial movements amongst his atoms, the pantheist an eternal uncaused movement of the world-substance. As much must be granted to Theism, and Lotze will not be deemed unreasonable in taking for granted the eternal movement of thought within the Divine Personality. In human personality a starting-point for activity is essential, but it is not necessary in the Divine.

The careful enumeration of possibilities, so distinctive of Lotze's method, having gone through the varied objections and met them, Lotze's conclusion boldly forestalls the last retort that might be offered to his argument, the contention that in this case the personality of God differs so fundamentally from that of man, that it does not deserve the same appellation. Lotze maintains that it is man, not God, who is barely deserving of the ascription of

personality. Throughout the discussion he declares the standpoint has been a perversion of the natural relations. What justification is there for attributing the term personality to its incomplete form in man and accordingly grudging it to the Deity completely endowed with it? From the standpoint Lotze would prefer, the reversal of the usual attitude, finiteness is the limitation rather than the expression of personality, and only in the Infinite is there personality in the proper sense. God is not only personal but the highest manifestation of the personal, and if personality cannot belong both to the finite and the Infinite, it is to the former and not the latter that it must be denied. That our complete self is never present with us at once, that we imperfectly know ourselves, asking whence we came and what we are, indicate how far are we removed from a perfect personality. With such words Lotze concludes his case, and one of the most vigorous and acute arguments in religious philosophy.

### § 5. *God and the World*

Whilst the foregoing account has traced the main outlines of Lotze's contribution to religious philosophy, no estimate of his work can be complete without some reference to his more detailed analysis, which may be characterized generally under the above heading. Serving to compact the framework of his philosophy into a more systematic exposition, it is admirable alike in its general insight, critical acumen, and methodology.

His remarks upon the 'three-proof' system of formal Theism are both interesting and acute. Whilst passing the usual stricture upon the ONTOLOGICAL argument, regarding the logical error of appeal from existence in thought to existence in reality, he recognizes its value as witness to a conviction needing no proof, which he states very expressively : 'The totality of all that has value . . . cannot possibly be homeless in the world, or in the realm of actuality, but has the very best claim to be regarded by us as imperishable reality.'

A good example of Lotze's method is afforded by his criticism of the misuse of the terms 'contingent' and 'necessary' in the COSMOLOGICAL argument. 'Contingent,' in common use, denotes secondary effects originating in designed action; in philosophical use, however, it stands for that of which the non-existence would be thinkable without contradiction. The term is also employed to denote accessory circumstances—by-products, so to speak—resulting from the application of a general law, and yet again to denote such facts as are deemed, rightly or wrongly, to be incidental to the general plan of world-government. Connected with this is a wide sense of the term in which 'contingent' means that which exists, but 'does not permit either of derivation from an effectuating condition or of justification by its own value.'<sup>1</sup>

The term 'necessary' strictly should mean 'conditioned,' that which under given conditions must arise. Contradictorily, it is used of the un-

<sup>1</sup> *Outlines of the Philosophy of Religion*, § 6, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* § 7, p. 12.

conditioned, that absolute matter of fact of which it can only be said that it *is*.

Clearly, then, 'contingent' in the first sense explained above is equivalent to 'necessary' in its proper sense, the effect of designed action. From this it is possible to reach the unconditioned, but such unconditioned cannot be described as 'necessary.' Hence the cosmological argument affords no proof. It is an assumption, an unavoidable assumption, of a postulate or datum from which explanation may depend. But upon these grounds there is no justification for assuming that such a datum is a single and real Being. From this standpoint either atoms or God might be demanded. Further, no way is indicated of bridging the gap between a single unconditioned Being and the multiplicity of conditioned existences. A second premiss is needed to reach a conclusion, as Lotze puts it.

The TELEOLOGICAL argument is examined with the same care. Nothing can be proved from the fact that things are serviceable to an end, seeing that they may also serve to frustrate our authorized and rational ends. Even the greatest ends are realized by the accordance of mechanical laws, which are not thereby shown to have been designedly directed toward those ends, since a similar result, if improbable, is never impossible by the combination of blind forces. It may still be held that the course of nature is the result of the persistence of one out of numberless possibilities. Nor can it be alleged that only those combinations which are favourable to rational ends exist, or have existed in the universe. It must also be admitted that even if design

were established, a polytheistic or a pantheistic conception could be shaped to meet the facts as well as a theistic, and the argument itself would afford no grounds for their refutation.

It is possible still to contend that the persistence of those surviving forms which are produced by blind forces forms no parallel, since purposeless forms might just as well persist as those that are valuable. To which Lotze replies that it is highly difficult to demonstrate an *intrinsic* value even in the forms we admire, or to prove that better might not have been established.

In fine, the teleological argument is no witness to God as a single designing intelligence. Rather does it testify to a conviction, which the case for the opposition cannot shake, that much that is beautiful, great, and excellent exists in the world. It is an argument for the existence of values which the constitution of the universe is capable of developing.

THE METAPHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE DEITY are handled with similar insight. That of *Unity* is unavoidable. It is, however, not to be understood of bare numerical unity, but rather as an expression of the obvious fact that the highest cannot be subordinated to any higher. Its reference is to that which, to coin a word, might be called the 'onlyness' of God.

Four more formal predicates remain. The divine *Immutability* denotes the consistency with which the inner states of God proceed from a nature that remains the same. *Omnipresence* is not a spatial conception, but expresses the immediacy of the divine activity everywhere. *Omnipotence* virtually



denotes the whole divine nature, in which all reality is included, and is not a predicate that can be simply added to the other predicates. To conceive it, however, as equivalent to absolutely unconditioned is absurd, since the absolutely unconditioned would be absolute inability to do anything, in short utter nothingness. To say, however, that God can do all possible implies a limit of possibility independent of God, which also is contradictory. It must therefore be understood as conveying the belief that God is the author of the grounds of the possible and impossible. Finally, just as omnipresence does not involve ubiquity in space, *Eternity* does not mean the unlimited pervasion of time, but independence of those temporal conditions which for the finite being are the bounds of existence.

THE RELATION OF GOD TO THE WORLD-ORDER is examined under the three familiar aspects of creation, preservation, and government.

*Creation* is viewed, not as a special work of God, nor as a development from His nature, but as signifying that the world is dependent for its existence and content upon His will. To speak of a process of creation is inappropriate, since such a description tacitly implies pre-existing forms by which the creating will works. *Preservation* denotes that the consistency and coherency of things, upon which our knowledge must depend, is not of itself, but at the last dependent upon God. *Government*, Lotze remarks, can only be spoken of when certain elements of the whole have independence of action, and may act against the governing plan. Action taken to meet this contingency is government. Such action

Lotze calls 'miracles'—a strange usage of the word—defining them as temporary invalidation of physical law in definite instances for definite purposes—a conception he regards as not unthinkable, but yet not capable of actual proof in any particular instance. A conflict between religious and scientific motives makes Lotze strangely indecisive at this point. Had he conceived a miracle to be, not the suspension of law, but the revelation of a higher or unknown law, he might have found a clearer path out of an intricate field of thought.

From the definition of government just given follows naturally the topic of FREEDOM, and subjects allied to it. Lotze is fully alive to the religious importance of the conception. He points out that the idea is natural, and is only contradicted by transference, at a late stage of development, of the scientific idea of causality from physical to moral nature. Seeing that the idea of freedom is not speculatively aroused, it is not surprising that it cannot be speculatively substantiated. Rather is it an ethical belief relying most strongly on the feelings of penitence and remorse, which uncontradictably assert that we might have acted in a manner different from that which we actually chose. The most that demonstration can do is to rebut objections. Freedom is to be regarded as an influence upon a causally ordered world, and not a contradiction of causality.

EVIL is, for Lotze, an insoluble enigma, and at no point is the hampering influence of Lotze's metaphysics so marked as in its preventing him from even approaching this critical topic. He merely remarks that it is useless to apologize for

its existence or deny its reality. Though it may legitimately be contended that the possibility of evil is involved as a consequence of freedom, Lotze does not think it needful that misused freedom should issue in physical consequences, having deleterious effect on the world and innocent beings, and that without any compensation. He considers it untenable to assert that the world was originally without evil, and that sin introduced it into the world, and rejects indignantly the dogma of original sin. It might, however, be retorted that the moral and not the physical consequences of sin constitute the real problem of evil—a fact Lotze seems to overlook. His view at the same time is melioristic, and he looks confidently for a realization of the supreme world-aim of blessedness, which is guaranteed by the conviction of religious feeling rather than by speculation, and indeed is for Lotze the essence of religion.

Lotze, speaking of CONSCIENCE, condemns as arbitrary, and detrimental to the imperative character of ethics, the hedonistic view which regards it as the self-preserving instrument of egoism, and also the restriction of conscience to the prudential function of dictating maxims gained from previous experience, hinting what Martineau has worked out clearly, the entire difference in the ethical character of the moral and the prudential.

Finally Lotze enumerates three propositions as characteristic of the religious as distinct from the intellectualist view of the world.<sup>1</sup>

‘(1) Ethical laws we designate as the will of God.

<sup>1</sup> *Outlines of the Philosophy of Religion*, § 80, p. 137.

‘(2) Individual finite spirits we designate, not as products of nature, but as children of God.

‘(3) Actuality we designate, not as the mere course of the world, but as the kingdom of God.’

The first contains, so Lotze remarks, the solution of the old enigma—is good good because God wills it, or does He will it because it is good? The answer lies in the recognition that good is simply the characterization of the will of God, and cannot be separated from it, except by abstraction. The second proposition conveys both the limitation of the finite and its subjection to God, and the exaltation of personality as no mere product of nature, but as raised above that by relation to God. The third serves to provide Lotze with a line of demarcation between faith and knowledge, sometimes too marked in his philosophy. It is perfectly allowable to declare that religious considerations must not interfere with impartial scientific investigation, but it is not possible to withdraw ‘the entire consideration of external reality’ from religion’s domain, without injustice, not to religion only, but to ‘external reality.’

Lotze’s view of DOGMA is attended by much practical wisdom. Recognizing that religion, though primarily personal, is also social, he grants the utility of dogmas and symbols, remarking aptly that their historical development will embrace the content of a religion more completely than the experience of a single person, though that may be more intense. Dogma he endues with a twofold office: preservative, embodying the results of religious experience; and regulative, restraining

excessive subjectivism. As dogma is not scientifically or speculatively conclusive, it is not to be held binding in its literal form. Its adoption, however, would be justified if it represented nearly the experience of the individual who employs it. A similar qualification is sufficient ground for joining an outward organization or religious community. Such communion is needful to fulfil man's religious requirements. The invisible Church, free and spiritual, is the communion of God and man, and man with man in God. The visible Church is a human institution to supply human needs in the religious life. As such its pretensions to authority are ill-founded, and, whilst it is not a mere adjunct of the State, it must conform to the general rules of government: a fact which must not disguise the need—the failure to recognize which Lotze regrets—that the State has of a religious foundation.

#### § 6. *Estimate of Lotze's Religious Philosophy*

Most readers discover that, without any sufficient reason, some writers repel, some attract, and that this by no means depends upon their agreement or otherwise with the writer's contentions. Rather is it due to the spirit and personality that the book reveals, which afford grounds for the same likes and dislikes that those we meet in person produce in us. The charm of Lotze's spirit and method is felt more keenly than the adequacy of his conclusions. Here is no stolid dogmatism, and no fantastic thought-spinning; simply an honest attempt to answer the fundamental questionings

of religious philosophy. At the same time a power that is firstly critical and secondarily constructive is not likely to produce a system entirely free from inconsistencies or incoherencies, and for this reason the methodological value of Lotze's work is of greater worth in the main than his positive conclusions. His is a criticism always acute and never unfair, carefully enumerating every possibility, and impartially endeavouring to do justice to every aspect of the question. He has no use for sarcasm, preferring the scales of reason to the arrows of scorn. The reverent spirit of his inquiries, the candid recognition of the limits of explanation, the due allowance of the place of moral, spiritual, and aesthetic values—all tend to popularize his thought even with those who are least able to agree with its principal issues, and to give his work a power that cannot, with justice, be called less than fascinating. It has been said that Lotze is popular because he is broadly 'orthodox,' and affords some philosophical justification for what many wish to believe—God, personality, freedom, immortality. It would be just as true and no less sapient to declare that an author like Haeckel is popular because he is unorthodox, and offers arguments for disbelieving in the same things. Advocates of any issue will always be hailed by those who desire to establish the same conclusions, yet lack the power of finding adequate arguments themselves. The attention that Lotze is gaining at the present time is rather owing to the increasing sense of the importance of the fact of personality, which, with the loosening hold of the absolutist

type of thought, is being inevitably forced to the forefront.

It must not be overlooked that Lotze's philosophical construction proceeded hand in hand with a polemic against a naturalistic and so-called scientific materialism, which in the middle of the nineteenth century was at its height. The ethereal speculation of Hegel afforded no weapon that could prevail against it. Its wane synchronizes and is not unconnected with the spread of Lotze's conceptions. Trained in, and conversant with, physical science, Lotze assigns to it its own territory and abates none of its proper claims. Yet its overweening, its trespass are met resolutely by the contention that the function of mechanism is subordinate, that it is intrinsically unable not merely to satisfy, but even to touch the ideal aspect of life. The spheres are distinct, but not separate; Lotze adopts and expounds whole-heartedly the mechanical view of nature, but insists on a teleological explanation, which is characteristically supported by an acute criticism of the hypothesis of anti-teleologists. Here, at least, something is owing to Lotze for demonstrating what is now universally acknowledged by all who have any understanding of the matter—that religion and science do not 'conflict.'

On the one hand, therefore, guarding against Bluchnerite materialism, and on the other fending off Hegelian absolutism, Lotze proceeds to the construction of his own world-view. From the standpoint of psychological religious philosophy Lotze evidently starts from the wrong place. It is not



mere prejudice, but rather the history of philosophy which renders the process from metaphysics to the Deity open to suspicion. Whilst the purview of religion may extend into metaphysics, in the stricter and closer sense of the term religion, in its spiritual and devotional significance, it is an open question whether its interests are not imperilled by a metaphysical alliance whose bread is sometimes offered in the form of a stone. The nakedness of Lotze's 'M' is so becomingly clothed with the attributes of personality and love that the religious consciousness receives it as a friend, but whether there is any worth in such a friendship is more than questionable.

Lotze insists clearly and correctly that an ultimate datum must be assumed, which philosophy has not to create but to explain. For himself, he starts from what he calls the natural view of a plurality of things, and proceeds to show that, in order to interact, they must be regarded not as independent objects but as manifestations of one underlying unity—a fact which converts, in Lotze's opinion, original Pluralism into Monism. But the argument is not by any means conclusive. A pluralism of things without any possible connexion would not even be a pluralism, it would not be a world; it would be nothing and unknowable. The plurality from which Lotze starts necessarily implies the unity he reaches. Both are part of the primary datum. But if plurality is impossible apart from unity, this Unity is only manifested as in the many and of the many, and by itself is as unknowable as an utterly isolated plurality

would be. It would, therefore, seem unwarranted to invest the Unity thus discovered with the superiority of real existence, and to dissolve the plurality of the world into its states.<sup>1</sup>

Apart, however, from the validity or invalidity of this objection, it is possible to ask upon what ground Lotze suddenly transforms this metaphysical unity into the personal Deity. The analysis of the process seems to reveal two separate lines of thought incontinently fused. From theoretical considerations he attains a conception of a unity, M; from judgements of value a conception of the supreme good, recognized as God. The identification of M with God is neither necessary nor in the interests of religion advisable, and, as well as being the most questionable feature in Lotze's religious philosophy, introduces a certain contradiction into his system. Metaphysically regarded, spirits are states of the Absolute; none the less Lotze posits for them freedom and independence. Stated in lowest terms, this independence means being for self, either consciously or in feeling, which must of course apply to every sentient creature, from mollusc to mammoth, as well as to the shadowy 'Things.' Religious sentiment, however, demands for spirits a capacity of initiation, and this Lotze grants as a moral necessity which is stated to be neither speculatively induced nor speculatively validated. This may be, but none the less it must be reconcilable with speculative considerations, and Lotze's metaphysic has cut away all theoretical ground for trusting this demand.

<sup>1</sup> For some acute remarks upon Lotze's argument from interaction cf. Wm. James's *Pluralistic Universe*, p. 55 seq.

Truly Lotze never succeeds in reconciling his value and his existential judgements, and the former intervene to sacrifice the latter. To say, with Herr Stählin, that Lotze's philosophy is 'a lean, dry Rationalism somewhat modified by its combination with a self-contradictory personal Pantheism'<sup>1</sup> is harsh; but the above picture of a metaphysical Absolute, struggling to contain within itself a host of independent spirits whose independence is metaphysically inexplicable, gives an unmistakable sting to the critic's remark.

The incompatibility of Lotze's two tendencies is further evidenced by the fact that, though his religious philosophy undoubtedly starts from his metaphysics, it is continued without connexion with them, indeed it would appear in contradiction of them, and the best value can be obtained by disconnecting Lotze's conclusions from their ground-work. They will well survive the separation. His underlying unity will then become a necessary part of the data, rather than a conclusion from them. It will be a characteristic of the world as we find it, not a single infinite being invested with moral, intellectual, and spiritual predicates. That must be reached along the other line of thought which Lotze manifests, from judgements of value. Such a course might enable a consistent doctrine of personal independence to be established—a thing Lotze tries to effect without success, and further give some account of the problem of evil, which he abandons absolutely.

Such a course would not weaken but rather

<sup>1</sup> *Kant, Lotze, and Ritschl*, p. 156.

confirm one of the greatest assets of Lotze's philosophy, an asset which has already proved of great influence and value—the attempt to establish the personality of God. The ingenuity of the argument is beyond question ; it has not been successfully rebutted. The crucial point is without doubt the applicability of the term personality to a Being whose inner states are in eternal movement (supposing that this datum be granted) and at the same time to beings whose thought at least arises from, and has a definite starting-point in, external stimuli. It may be contended that the two are not properly covered by the same name, and that, if they are, human personality is so unlike the divine as to be incomparable with it. Lotze suggests that, if there is any doubt about the matter, it is man and not God to whom we should hesitate to ascribe personality. This may be a clever turning of the tables, but the fact remains that this may become just as powerful an argument as the view against which it is directed, for denying what the usual conception of divine personality expresses—a similarity in nature between God and man. Human personality, whatever it may be in itself, is realized by reference to a not-self ; that of God is not. It may be, as Lotze says, that it is absurd to deny personality to God because He possesses it completely and we do not, but from Lotze's standpoint it may still be possible to refuse the same term to what is understood by human personality and also to the divine personality at one and the same time. Lotze's argument is really a powerful rejoinder to those who regard the Deity as impersonal or un-

spiritual, and the possibility of linking under one word the natures of divine and human personality must be decided on other grounds.

The separation between the metaphysical and religious portions of Lotze's philosophy which has already been mentioned is manifest here in the fact that the argument for the divine personality is in no wise weakened but rather benefited by being shorn from Lotze's metaphysical Absolute. If Lotze fails, it is not in demonstrating the divine personality, but in endeavouring to demonstrate the personality of the Absolute, the principle of unity, much better designated as M than as the Almighty. He had the choice either of making spirits real personalities and the principle of their interaction personal, or else of making the principle personal and spirits only apparently so. Endeavouring to secure both he has properly obtained neither. It is one thing to make a personal God the ground of all that is, another to try with Lotze to make a personal God the sum-total of all that is—a task that cannot be accomplished with philosophic and religious consistency. God can be, the Absolute cannot be, a person. Lotze rejects the formal arguments of Theism, and at the same time introduces an argument of his own to prove the necessity of the divine existence, the argument concerning the principle of interaction. Whatever can be said against the 'three-proof system' which Lotze discards, the system that is now generally held to afford no 'proof' whatsoever, can be alleged against Lotze's own method; and whilst the ascription of personality to the God of the religious consciousness

may be defended, personality cannot be attached to the artificially proved Absolute of Lotze's metaphysics.

Whilst regarding, therefore, Lotze's procedure as unfortunate in this respect, it must not be held sufficient to dismiss, as certain of his critics have felt themselves free to do, Lotze's philosophy of religion on the ground of his metaphysical errors. It must be examined independently of a reasoning to which it is not germane, even though its author considered it to be, and on its own rightful basis it will be found able to bear a far more strict and searching investigation.

In the doctrine of value-judgements Lotze also provides an asset of especial service in religious philosophy, though it is unfortunate in the emphatic insistence laid upon the separation of the world of forms and of values, even if this is qualified by belief in their necessary but inexplicable unity. For when Lotze peremptorily cuts away thought from reality, and places such guarantee of reality as we may have in feeling, he is manifestly at fault. Feeling gives the sense of pleasure and pain, but that is not the consciousness of a value. A value-judgement is none the less a judgement. Feeling alone, as sensation, does not give rise to value-judgements apart from some interpretative process of thought, and pure sensations are notoriously psychological figments. It is impossible, therefore, to cut off in this case value-judgements from existential judgements, or separate so entirely thought from reality, and nothing shows this so clearly as Lotze's own failure to do so.



The doctrine of the value-judgement gives rise to the 'ethical' basis of metaphysics. Without contesting the ultimate dependence of metaphysics on values, it may be asked whether the term 'ethical' is appropriate. As Lotze shows, value-judgements are not only ethical but religious and aesthetic; 'We besides conceive of the "beautiful" too, and the "happy," or "blessedness," as united with this Good into one complex of all that has value.'<sup>1</sup> Whilst value implies reference to some good, it does not inevitably imply the ethical good strictly so called. The term good may denote that which is esteemed, the object of value in the value-judgement, without any necessary reference to the ethically, morally good. Lotze's subordination of metaphysics to ethics is rather the making of the metaphysically valid depend upon the God who unites in Himself all values, and may justly be termed religious, perhaps with more accuracy even than ethical. Lotze sees that the Supreme Reality, in order to be such, must meet religious, ethical, and aesthetic needs as well as the rational and logical. Reality, that is to say, must be the ground of all values. Lotze fixes upon the ethical signification of the good, rather than upon the good in the wider and more general sense, because of a hedonistic conception that 'the only real and substantial "good" . . . exists only in the pleasure of some sensitive spirit.'<sup>2</sup> If this be denied it would follow that no particular reason would exist to fix definitely upon ethics as the basis of metaphysics, but rather

<sup>1</sup> *Outlines of Metaphysic*, Eng. trans., § 92, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> *Outlines of Philosophy of Religion*, § 67, p. 117.



would metaphysics be regarded as based on the belief that Ultimate Reality is not a formal process of thought, but the ground of value, and upon this faith in the meaning and purpose of all, our thought must at the last depend.

Thus does a religious philosophy rooted in metaphysics yield unexpectedly results of the greatest service to modes of thought starting from the rejection of metaphysical bases. That alone is enough to demonstrate the ineptitude of the criticism which declares that Lotze's philosophy is metaphysical rather than religious. Apart from all connexion with his metaphysic, which has independent value, Lotze's religious philosophy is fertile in a manner hardly equalled in the theory of religion to-day.

Especially is this the case with regard to the two great contributions just noticed, the treatment of the divine personality and of judgements of value. Apart from their direct influence they have, taken together, done more than any ready estimate can reckon for the humanizing of philosophy, and the debt is unforgettable on the part of those who are endeavouring to give to ethical, aesthetic, and religious interests their proper place in our world-view. Lotze saw in the universe more than the apotheosis of colourless and purposeless pure thought, heedless of and unresponsive to all but itself, rolling and unrolling in logical procession a superhuman world-plan. For him the universe bore within its breast a worth, a meaning, and a hope. He found no godhead in the abstract consistency of all things, and could deify no formal movements of an over-intellectualized Absolute, as

if in their ordered symmetry they were the ultimate good. Lotze's teleology taught him to regard the world as made for the realization of the highest values, phenomena and spirits alike existing not that the fancy of the Absolute might play, but that in them God's blessedness might be multiplied. He still teaches what is being very slowly learnt—that philosophy exists for man and not man for philosophy ; and the influence of Lotze, who deserves a name as a great thinker that has been somewhat tardily accorded to him, is leading philosophy toward a land of greater promise, a land which he himself saw, as from Pisgah, but did not live to tread.

## CHAPTER III

### RELIGIOUS CONCEPTIONS AS VALUE-JUDGEMENTS : RITSCHL AND RITSCHLIANS

#### § 1. *The Constructive Work of Ritschl*

So many useful accounts of the Ritschlian school are now available, both in English and German, that it is not needful to attempt here any general survey of the position of Ritschl and his disciples. Moreover, as Ritschl stands primarily as a Christian theologian, a great part of his work—his presentation of the meaning of the Christian religion—though of compelling interest, is out of the bounds of the general problem of religious philosophy. Negatively, the Ritschlian school is anti-metaphysical, anti-mystical, and anti-dogmatic, but the philosophy of religion has been better served by its constructive work, and amidst this the chief interest centres in the development of the view, which has already been traced in Lotze also, of religious conceptions as value-judgements. Construction will always bear the test of time better than criticism, for if criticism be false it fails more rapidly than a false construction, and even if true, it decays also with the decay of that which it destroys.

Albrecht Ritschl (1822–89), like Schleiermacher the son of a clergyman, received his theological

training in contact with minds as diverse as those of Hengstenberg and Baur, and in touch with Rothe, Müller, Tholuck, and Erdmann. Beginning as a disciple of Hegel, he emerged from that influence into a position of independence and opposition, which has been powerful in counteracting Hegelian conceptions in religion and theology. Schleiermacher died when Ritschl was a boy, Lotze was his colleague ; both exercised a wide but not dominant influence upon him, and, like every modern thinker, he pays royalties to Kant, from whose philosophy, like a great watershed, streams flow through the most diverse fields of thought. The fundamental separation of the theoretical and practical, the intellectual and moral, which characterizes the Ritschlian school is a legacy from Kant, and its development is carried on by aid of suggestions from Lotze. Nevertheless, Ritschl has claim to be counted one of the most powerful and original factors in theology since the time of the Reformation,<sup>1</sup> and, whilst not personally distinguished in philosophy or religious philosophy, his influence is very clearly marked upon the modern theory of religion.

Such of Ritschl's work as is of immediate concern to the philosophy of religion is mainly contained in the third volume of his greatest publication, *Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung* (the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation),<sup>2</sup> together with his small

<sup>1</sup> Professor Swing says 'world-transforming,' which is perhaps an excess of enthusiasm.

<sup>2</sup> Translated by Mackintosh and Macaulay. The smaller volume is not translated.

*Theologie und Metaphysik.* Amongst those who with greater or less exactitude may be classed as followers of Ritschl are Herrmann, Kaftan, and Harnack, together with Schultz, Schurer, Wendt, Lobstein, Kattenbusch, J. Weiss, Reischle, Loofs, and Otto Ritschl, his son. Sabatier and McGiffert in France and America respectively have treated Ritschl's contentions sympathetically. Dr. Orr and Dr. Garvie are best known as English expositors of Ritschl, the former being unfavourable, the latter on the whole favourable, to his views. Favourably or unfavourably regarded, however, the weight of Ritschl lies heavily upon the mind of Protestant theology to-day.

The most grudging must at least admire the candid and free spirit which Ritschl's investigations reveal. He desires to explain and maintain his Christian faith, not merely negatively, as an apologetic apologist, deprecatingly meeting one attack whilst peering apprehensively for the next, but constructively by placing it upon an independent and positive basis. The merit of such a purpose neither stands with its success nor falls with its failure. Moreover, when it is fashionable to assume that the desired spirit of impartiality in the study of religion is guaranteed at once by levelling Christianity and Muhammadanism, and significantly coupling Jesus with Zarathustra—as gross a *petitio principii* as ever posed as a scientific method—Ritschl's frank insistence upon the supreme place of the Christian religion is at once brave and necessary. The prominence given by the Ritschlian theology to this fact, has without doubt gained for it a wider

recognition and respect than it could otherwise have enjoyed.

It is yet too early to measure the permanence of the influence of Ritschl, and prophecy is unprofitable.<sup>1</sup> There has never been a Ritschlian school, in the sense of a band of writers supporting his positions unreservedly, but there are many Ritschlians; that is to say, writers who owe a large debt to the general principles of Ritschl. The same disintegration that followed amongst Hegel's disciples after his death has appeared amongst the Ritschlians, but that does not forbid the expectation that the survival of the fittest of the conceptions of Ritschl will prove a lasting gain to religious thought.

## § 2. *Ritschl's View of Religion*

Ritschl expressly disclaims any desire to appear amongst the apologists, but it must none the less be remembered that his investigations are always undertaken with the definite object of interpreting the significance of one religion—Christianity. Accordingly he reverses the wonted method of beginning with religion in general and proceeding to Christianity in particular, by studying religion in general only in so far as it will lead to an understanding of Christianity, adding that, with regard to this understanding, the general conception of religion must be used not *constitutively* but *regulatively*. To fail to do so will, he considers, result in the undermining of Christian conviction.

<sup>1</sup> An excellent and appreciatively critical estimate is afforded by J. K. Mozley in his *Ritschlianism*, p. 241 seq.

Ritschl, however, makes it clear that it is by no means assured that such a general conception can be framed. Fully to do justice to the manifold of characteristics presented in the varied and heterogeneous forms of religion would demand the employment of language more vague than vocabularies contain or minds can grasp. Consequently the result, even if obtained, is not likely to give satisfaction or prove of practical use. Beating out the general conception so thin, in order to cast its covering over such complex and diverse conditions as a general definition must embrace, it is likely to end in being altogether impalpable. The view, however, which Ritschl adopts is as follows. 'In every religion, what is sought, with the help of the superhuman spiritual power revered by man, is a solution of the contradiction in which man finds himself, as both a part of the world of nature and a spiritual personality claiming to dominate nature.'<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere he explains that this superhuman spiritual power is appealed to as the world-ruler to exercise its ability to establish man's personality in its freedom against the domination both of nature and of society, such freedom being regarded as the state of blessedness desired by man. Again: 'Religion in every case is an interpretation of man's relation to God and the world, guided by the thought of the sublime power of God to realize the end of this blessedness of man.'<sup>2</sup> Ritschl, however, considers that this statement employs the terms 'God,' 'world,' 'blessedness' in a manner too distinctively

<sup>1</sup> *Justification and Reconciliation*, Eng. trans., vol. iii. p. 199.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 194.



Christian to be able to claim validity as a general conception, adding that the use of a general conception of religion, however vague it may be, is that it forms some kind of a norm by which to judge religions comparatively with respect to it.

It will be noticed that for Ritschl the central and fundamental fact of religion is not an immediate contact of the soul with God, as it was with Schleiermacher, but man's relation to the world; and the essential endeavour of religion is to solve the contradictions in which man, from natural and social conditions, may find himself. The various religions of the world succeed more or less in offering some solution; it is Christianity which transcends all the rest, not only from this point of view but from every point of view, not only in most completely answering this need of man, but in giving much else over and above it.

Some Ritschlians, notably Kaftan, criticize their master on the ground that this view of religion savours too much of intellectual knowledge and that it ignores feeling, making religion consist in a fact which is surely not religious—that is, a particular relation of man to the world. Dr. Garvie<sup>1</sup> objects that such consciousness of contradiction cannot arise until human thought has reached an advanced stage both as regards the idea of personality and of nature. Ritschl's critics are more severe. Stählin, who never loses an opportunity of flying tooth and nail at Ritschl's views, belabours him breathlessly for thus describing the *origin* of religion.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ritschlian Theology*, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> *Kant, Lotze, and Ritschl*, p. 238 seq.

Dr. Orr<sup>1</sup> regards the matter in the same light. But is there any evidence that Ritschl intends either a description of the origin or whole nature of religion? Elsewhere he states that knowledge, feeling, and will must all be manifest in every religion and no one can be regarded as more fundamental than the others; but 'the question is reserved whether our scientific explanation of the total fact of religion shall give the preference to one or other of the functions of spirit.'<sup>2</sup> Such is actually the case, for Ritschl displays interest in knowledge far more than in feeling or will in religion. Is he not, therefore, similarly to be understood with regard to his general characterization of religion? He is seeking neither the origin nor the common elements of all religions, but rather a common denominator in every religion, which he exhibits because the religion in which he is interested most completely recognizes and meets this aspect.

Ritschl's language is loosely worded, but even though he speaks of religion as springing up from man's conflict with the world, it does not follow that he considers he is supplying a formal and scientific account of the matter, but rather does he give prominence to a widespread characteristic of religion, which for him, with the Christian doctrine of justification and reconciliation before his mind, was of particular interest and importance. He declares frankly that he glances at other religions merely 'to point out the modifications for the worse which they exhibit when compared with

<sup>1</sup> *Ritschlian Theology and Evangelical Faith*, p. 70 seq.

<sup>2</sup> *Justification, &c.*, p. 199.

Christianity,'<sup>1</sup> and makes no claim to consider either religion or religions philosophically or comparatively. Under these circumstances it is surely taking Ritschl more seriously than he intends to discuss the tentative suggestions that occupy but a few pages of the *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung* as a condensed philosophy of religion.

Dr. Garvie, in a neat phrase, describes Ritschl's view as the pathology, not the biology, of religion.<sup>2</sup> There is point as well as neatness in the remark, but it is questionable whether this view can be said to be 'a temporary phase . . . distinctive only of a small class.'<sup>3</sup> Professor James, after a searching empirical investigation, is led to regard 'an uneasiness and its solution' as a basal fact common to all religions. Ritschl uses the language of a higher state of development and speaks of personality and nature, but none the less is aiming at the same thing as Professor James, who has stated it more fundamentally. Long before man can define his personality, or 'nature,' he feels that he is not right, and looks to his religion for solution. This is neither all that religion is, nor even one of its higher stages. Yet it is widespread, and characteristic of some part of the religious experience of all. It is, however, a preliminary experience, which the deeper and fuller development transcends. If Ritschl is to be criticized, it is not for fixing upon this fact, but rather for not following the fact far enough, where it leads beyond itself, beyond even the 'blessedness' of the reconciliation of which Ritschl speaks. It may be

<sup>1</sup> *Justification, &c.*, p. 198.

<sup>2</sup> *Ritschlian Theology*, p. 171.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

that Ritschl's deep-rooted antipathy to Mysticism prevents him from continuing above the stage of storm and stress to where man enters into deepest communion with God.<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to indulge in antipathies of any kind without paying for them, and many gaps in many philosophies might be stopped by the use of materials which the authors have despised and rejected, because they are able only to recognize their abuse and not their use, their displacement rather than their place.

In this respect, therefore, Ritschl's view of religion is a retrogression compared with Schleiermacher's. For Schleiermacher religion was primary, immediate, independent. Ritschl sees only an aspect which is secondary and derived. On the other hand, in contrast with Schleiermacher's religious individualism, Ritschl regards religion as essentially social, and where Schleiermacher saw the aesthetic in religion Ritschl sees the practical. For Schleiermacher religion was an emotion, and religious fellowship, though desirable, a luxury ; for Ritschl religion is a power whereby man is lifted into a new life, and fellowship a bounden necessity. 'Salvation . . . [says Ritschl] when rightly understood, is incompatible with egoism.'<sup>2</sup> Hence his emphasis upon the kingdom of God. As distinct from the Church, which is the worshipping community, this is the association of all mankind. It is, moreover, an

<sup>1</sup> Cf., however, Herrmann's *Communion of the Christian with God* for a doctrine of religious fellowship written from the Ritschlian standpoint and rejecting Mysticism.

<sup>2</sup> *Justification, &c.*, p. 206.

ethical fellowship. In it the individual is subordinate to the commonwealth, but that both may reach the end and ideal—spiritual domination over the world. The ethical is strongly marked in Ritschl's religious sense, and religion for him is a means to the ethical end.

Coupled with this is an accentuation of the importance of historical perspective in religion. History is to be regarded as giving expression to that which is of permanent value amidst the forms into which religion casts itself. To use a definition of Harnack's, Christianity is 'eternal life in the midst of time.'<sup>1</sup> The objective aspect of this life is to be found in the facts of history, which are subjectively estimated in value-judgements. Historical fact and value-judgements are therefore correlatives, each supposing the other. The general nature of human history, Kaftan remarks, can only be expressed in the word 'life.'<sup>2</sup> Christianity—and for Ritschl Christianity and religion were virtually synonyms—being a life, its expressions cannot be read in doctrine, but in the history of man, and this historical sense has proved itself an asset of value in Ritschl's exposition of religion.

Ritschl's doctrine of God accepts the idea of personality as the form sanctioned by revelation, and therefore, for theology at least, 'is justified scientifically as the only practicable form of the conception.'<sup>3</sup> Rejecting metaphysical speculation as to the essential nature of the Deity as outside

<sup>1</sup> *What is Christianity?* p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Truth of the Christian Religion*, ii. p. 327.

<sup>3</sup> *Justification, &c.*, p. 237.

of our ken, Ritschl fixes upon the fundamental attribute of love, any others being derivative from this, and to be regarded as religious expressions of the confidence which we have in this love ; the omnipotence and eternity of God, for example, being merely the expression of faith in the might and persistence of God's care for His own, are not to be understood metaphysically. Finally, he derives from the love of God his doctrine of reconciliation, and the establishment of the kingdom of God as the *summum bonum*. Whatever may be thought of the limitation of God's attributes here involved, it is at least clear that Ritschl contends for the two that have the fullest practical value, and his insistence upon the legitimacy of the use of the idea of personality is a clear advance upon Schleiermacher, though it is adopted on far less warrantable grounds than those advanced by Lotze.

The Ritschlian school has been negatively described as anti-dogmatic, anti-mystical, anti-metaphysical. Yet the condemnation of dogma is largely inspired by the dislike of the metaphysical character of so many Christian dogmas, and Harnack's work upon the history of dogma resolves itself into criticism of the method and results rather than what might be called the principle of dogma. The Ritschlians are not to be charged with dreaming of an entirely undogmatic religion, which indeed would be inconsistent with the stress laid upon religious knowledge and its expression. For the objective expression of subjective value-judgements is neither more nor less than dogma. Ritschlianism, therefore, is anti-dogmatic rather than undogmatic,



opposed to existing ecclesiastical dogma, but unwilling to dispense with all dogma.

If Ritschl's antipathy to metaphysics is at the root of his condemnation of dogma, it also explains, in part at least, his dislike of Mysticism, for the *Theologie und Metaphysik* traces Mysticism back to the Neoplatonists, whose mysticism was cross-woven with much metaphysical subtlety. Moreover, as the epistemology of Ritschl was such as to leave no place for the mystical, and the practical character of his conception of religion such as little fosters it, the hostility of the school follows from the application of its principles. The extent of this opposition has been variously estimated, some regarding it as a denial of the possibility of direct communion with God, others holding that the historical revelation in Christ allows of the direct operation of God upon the soul through Christ, and hence a place for mystical experience, conditioned by and dependent on that historical revelation. Seeing that, as in the case of dogma, Ritschl's dislike of Mysticism arises rather from its history than from antipathy to the experience itself, this is more probably the correct estimate.

Though the opposition to dogma and to Mysticism are both connected with Ritschl's rejection of metaphysics, he is not without hesitancy and inconsistency in his attempts to banish from theology both metaphysics and those forms of speculative Theism which work under a licence from metaphysics. A confusion between metaphysics and epistemology, the result of Ritschl's early Hegelianism, contributes to this result. Stating that every theo-



logian must have a definite theory of knowledge, he names three—those of Plato, Kant, and Lotze, and professes agreement with the last of these. Yet neither his critics nor his friends have ever been agreed as to what his epistemology actually is, though it is generally admitted that, despite his statement, it is in no wise that of Lotze. It is set forth confusedly, not to say contradictorily. On the whole, it would appear a mingling of the general idealistic view which regards things as having their existence only in thought, together with a naïve realism which assumes that things as they are for us are things as they are for themselves—a view obviously ill fitted to proceed side by side with the former conception. On the strength—one should perhaps say weakness—of this he feels justified in abandoning metaphysics so far as the religious consciousness is concerned. But apart from the question of the spurious character of Ritschl's theory of knowledge, epistemology is not metaphysics, and this simple fact in itself is enough to determine the inconsequence of Ritschl's attitude. He has a perfect right to dispense with metaphysics if he wishes, but it cannot be said that he affords any reason for so doing. The actual ground of the rejection is far more probably this, that Ritschl was independently led to regard the value-judgement as sufficient for the expression of the religious consciousness, and metaphysics, accordingly unnecessary, becomes, as his thought develops, not merely worthless but positively harmful.

§ 3. *The Value-Judgement*<sup>1</sup>: *An Estimate of Ritschl's Contribution to Religious Philosophy*

It must be admitted that hitherto little of advantage to religious philosophy has been discovered in Ritschl's thought. His view of religion is subsidiary, and lacking in the articulation of precise thinking; his polemic against dogma, mysticism, and metaphysics, is productive of more smoke than flame. It has not prevailed against them, and must be regarded as in the main merely a temperamental protest against what are likely still to be perennial methods. The importance of Ritschl to the philosophy of religion is to be discovered almost wholly in this, that he and his followers have drawn fresh attention to, and attempted systematically to employ, value-judgements in religious thought.

Although not making use of the term *Werthurtheile* ('judgements of worth' or of 'value,' sometimes loosely 'spiritual judgements,'—value-judgement is most distinctive and convenient), which Ritschl uses, following Lotze, the doctrine of value-judgements, like so much else in modern philosophy, has been traced back to Kant, who distinguished between 'relative' and 'inner' value, and paved the way by the separation of pure and practical reason. Ritschl himself states that Luther's ex-

<sup>1</sup> It seems best to retain the term, though some Ritschlians are now abandoning it: Kaftan, for example, and also apparently Herrmann. Their objection is, of course, purely terminological, and does not convey any intention of dispensing with the truth the value-judgement expresses.

planation of the first commandment is a recognition of the value-judgement, and it may be traced still further. The principle underlies St. Paul's statement that spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and is the basis of more than one of the sayings of Jesus. The credit for the philosophical enunciation of the doctrine, however, belongs to Lotze, and, in a lesser degree, to Herbart and De Wette; but the use which the Ritschlians have made of it has been the chief factor in rendering it impossible to-day to ignore a distinction that Plato did not penetrate, and of which the scholastics never dreamed.

Religious knowledge, according to Ritschl, is expressed in value-judgements. The existential judgements of logic, the judgements which science and philosophy employ, deal with the object in itself, with its nature and inner and outer relations. This, however, is not the only way in which an object may be judged. Instead of asking what it *is in itself*, we may ask what it *means for us*. That is to say, the object may be regarded as it affects the subject, and the expression of its meaning—that is, its worth or value—and from this standpoint is given the value-judgement.

Ritschl distinguishes between concomitant and independent value-judgements. The former accompany the existential judgement, which obviously would not be made at all were there not a certain interest attaching itself thereto. Independent value-judgements, on the other hand, 'are all perceptions (*Erkenntnisse*) of moral ends or moral hindrances, in so far as they excite moral pleasure or pain, or, it may be, set in motion the will to appropriate what

is good or repel the opposite.'<sup>1</sup> Religious value-judgements are similar to these moral value-judgements, differing in that religion is not, except in its higher stages, necessarily in relation to moral conduct. 'Religious knowledge moves in independent value-judgements, which relate to man's attitude to the world, and call forth feelings of pleasure or pain in which man either enjoys the dominion over the world vouchsafed to him by God, or feels grievously the lack of God's help to that end.'<sup>2</sup> The distinction between religious and ethical value-judgements becomes, it is stated, less clear as religion becomes more ethical; still, the former deal directly with man's relations to God and the world, the latter deal directly with man's relations to man, and so only indirectly with God. Ritschl says nothing of aesthetic value-judgements.

Although, as it has been noticed, Ritschl does not follow the example of Schleiermacher in placing religion in an independent and immediate position, he intends that the value-judgement shall provide a peculiar and appropriate sphere for religious knowledge, and distinguish it from knowledge of a theoretical character. There is no necessity to vindicate the use of value-judgements, for their place in our thinking is not challenged; what is needed is to guard against such conceptions of their function as endanger their significance, and in order to do so certain of these must now come under notice.

In some quarters the impression has been fostered that value-judgements are symbolic, and express that which does not exist in the same sense as the

<sup>1</sup> *Justification*, &c., p. 205.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

objects of the theoretical or existential judgement exist—that is to say, they are subjective estimates, symbolizing, but not representing, actual reality. Such a misconception has been charged against Ritschl and his followers, but entirely without foundation, for there is no evidence that Ritschl considers the authority of the value-judgement to be less than that of the theoretical judgement,<sup>1</sup> and Kaftan at least has definitely asserted the objective truth of such propositions. The primary meaning of the word 'real' is 'real for me,' and that characteristic is completely fulfilled in the value-judgement. Moreover, psychologically our earliest judgements are judgements of value, theoretical judgements belonging to a later and more advanced stage of thought, so that on this ground at least the value-judgement has an independent claim to validity. It must also be remembered that a value-judgement is a judgement, and thus a part of our knowledge, since knowledge may be defined as that which is predicated of reality. Every value-judgement is asserted as fact in the same way as theoretical judgements are, and, though it is subjectively asserted, it none the less *ex facto* claims actual reality. There is nothing, therefore, in the enunciation of a value-judgement to differentiate its claim to objective truth from that of theoretical judgement.

Such differentiation, however, is frequently made on the ground of the admitted subjectivity of the value-judgement. To divide sharply 'subjective' value-judgements and 'objective' theoretical judgements is misleading, though it is frequently effected

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mozley, *Ritschlianism*, p. 93 seq.

upon the plea that acceptance can be gained for the latter in any normal mind by argument, but that values are constituted by feeling and will, which cannot be so determined. Such a statement is only partially correct. The only argumentation that can be conducted in a purely theoretical manner is that which is carried on under given and undisputed conditions, like that of Euclid, or certain mathematical theories. But these are by no means the most important of our judgements. In others, usually reckoned as theoretical judgements, the will to believe enters, as in the case of the value-judgement. Theoretically, decision in these cases is made according to the preponderance of reason. The scanty unanimity that has been attained in such matters, however, indicates clearly that either there are very few minds capable of accepting reason, or of reasoning, or else that the will and not merely the reason is a factor in the case. There is, as a matter of fact, a strongly subjective element entering into the theoretical judgement, for out of two possible alternatives that which is accepted is almost always that which accords best with our previously established convictions, or which is most likely to establish that which we desire to prove ; the matter is by no means decided by the mere reasons for or against, without reference to our other convictions. This element of subjectivity in the theoretical judgement forbids any wholesale separation of value-judgements and theoretical judgements as subjective and objective respectively. Theoretical judgements are expressed as objective, and influenced subjectively ; value-judgements are expressed as subjective, but



have an objective reference. To speak of the one as 'fact' and the other as 'poetry' is as loose as it is misleading. Both have reference to fact, but fact represented from different standpoints.

A further misunderstanding is that which assumes that the Ritschlians have split man's mind with the wedge of their theory, and sealed in hermetical compartments, unalterably separate, judgements of fact and of value.<sup>1</sup> It must be admitted that Ritschl is not always guiltless of giving rise to this impression, and it has been supported by the treatment afforded by other writers. Höffding, for example, who describes religion as concerned, not with the comprehension, but with the valuation of existence, and defines its essence as the conviction that no value perishes out of the world, rigidly separates in treatment the religious and scientific views of the universe—a most unpsychological course for a psychologist of eminence to adopt—and, whilst contending that they are ultimately reconcilable, divides them as the sheep and the goats. Inconsistently, however, he persists in calling the ages when religion has dominated not only the valuation, but the comprehension of existence—the last thing that on his showing it should do—the 'golden ages' of religion.

Höffding comes far nearer to truth when he asserts that 'every conception of life must in the long run be determined by the values which are found or produced in real life.'<sup>2</sup> That is to say,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Wenley, *Contemporary Theology and Theism*, p. 117 seq., for a confident expression of this criticism.

<sup>2</sup> *Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. trans., p. 379.



value-judgements are not simply concomitant with, but modify the theoretical judgements by which existence is comprehended. The unity of the two is established by the truth that facts depend upon values, and values depend upon facts.

Ritschl comes in sight of the first of the statements when he speaks of concomitant value-judgements. But value-judgements do not merely accompany theoretical judgements, they give rise to them; for it is inconceivable that any theoretical judgement should be made without interest or motive, in other words apart from some value. Kaftan has distinguished between value-judgements proper and theoretical judgements based upon them. But ultimately every theoretical judgement depends upon a value, simply because a fact is only known as a fact because it has a value, and a fact without a value is meaningless.

In the second place, value-judgements may be said to depend upon facts, for a value-judgement is not made about nothing, but presupposes an object. If, as it has been stated, an object ultimately depends upon a value, the converse of this is obtained by the realization that value-judgements depend upon objects. It is sometimes overlooked that in Ritschl's system the objective fact is the historical revelation given in Christ.<sup>1</sup> This, though Ritschl has often said that it cannot be expressed in theoretical but only in value-judgements, is none the less the objective ground of the subjective religious value-judgement. The critics who insist that for Ritschlianism religion is the groundless weaving of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Oman, *Problems of Faith and Freedom*, p. 379.

individual fancy, are hurling a reproach against which the system is fortified, and perhaps, since it rebounds harmlessly, it is apt to be picked up again for use on the next occasion. Ritschl cannot be excused from a certain looseness of expression, and a certain incompleteness of treatment; but whether he has made or failed to make the unity of the theoretical and the value-judgement plain, the unity exists, not merely as an unfounded hope, but as a perfectly justifiable inference.

The final answer, however, to the assumed inferiority of the value-judgements, as well as the assertions of separateness between the two, is supplied by the consideration that what have hitherto been spoken of as 'facts' and 'values' are ultimately one, and that the primary source of both kinds of judgement is the assertion of a value.

To do this is not to deny the place of the theoretical judgement or the convenience of the distinction, for the value-judgement deals with that which cannot be assessed by the theoretical judgement. They are not, however, separate. In the first place, self-consciousness is one, and our knowledge a unity, and within our self-consciousness both meet, exercised by the same subject dealing with the same objects. It may be allowed, therefore, that the unity of our knowledge embraces both, and neither by itself is the measure of our intellectual activity. The matter, however, can be carried further, and the two aspects traced to one source.

Dr. Orr, in contending<sup>1</sup> that 'value-judging is ensphered by the theoretic consciousness,' and that

<sup>1</sup> *Ritschlianism*, pp. 276-7.

'a theoretic element is involved in the value-judgement itself,' evidently regards the theoretical judgement as primary; but is not the exact reverse the case? A theoretical judgement is concerned with 'fact,' but it is difficult to see what account can be given of fact unless it is defined as accepted value. Fact and value are joined in an inseparability so intimate that the two terms may be regarded as ultimately almost interchangeable.<sup>1</sup> By abstraction, but not by psychology, can they be parted. 'Fact' arises from the habit of predicating the truth or falsity, goodness or badness, pleasantness or unpleasantness, of things. Such judgements are value-judgements, but in course of time, and by reason of social intercourse and comparison with other valuations, they assume the character of definite and objective predications; that is to say, of 'fact.' Upon such facts are established systems of explanation, and hence theoretical judgements, judgements of facts as such apart from their values. Evidently, therefore, the theoretical judgement is concerned with the material provided by valuation, with the consolidated and accepted value-judgements which are known as facts. Upon such theoretical judgements, in their turn, fresh value-judgements may depend; but if their account of the matter be correct it follows that the original source of all judgements is in value-judgements, and fresh proof of the unity of judgements of fact and of value is afforded.

<sup>1</sup> Some further light upon the relation of facts and values is afforded in the chapter on Pragmatism as a Religious Philosophy.

It may be asked why, if this be so, value-judgements as a class are less generally received and established than theoretical judgements. Theoretical judgements are, however, just such value-judgements as, by reason of their acceptance, have lost their subjective character. The reason why they have found acceptance is because they are concerned with the world of sense wherein we have the greatest capabilities of corroborating our judgements. Religion deals with the supersensuous, which is less manifest, though not therefore necessarily less real. All knowledge, just in proportion as it transcends the world of sense, finds less general acceptance. Its judgements, therefore, are not transformed into 'facts,' but remain as values, assured indeed to him who experiences them, but not ratified by all, different in degree but not in kind from theoretical judgements. Aesthetics, which touches both the sensuous and the supersensuous, can exhibit value-judgements so largely received as to be often claimed as 'facts.' Ethics reveals a similar state of things, though less pronounced, in so much as ethics transcends more than does aesthetics the world of sense; and religion, which most of all goes beyond these bounds, is accordingly most of all concerned with judgements of value.

The conclusion reached is therefore this, that the separation of facts and values, of theoretical judgements and value-judgements, is logically, but not psychologically, founded. It is a distinction for convenience, not a primary differentiation. According to the purpose in view it is frequently useful to fix especially emphasis upon one or other, but to a

complete apprehension both are needful, and supplement each other. They are different phases of a knowledge which embraces both. If the Ritschlians are at fault, it is because their insistent emphasis of one aspect has given rise to an incorrect impression of incommensurability between the two, but not because, as for example, Professor Wenley states by their theory 'man's inner nature has been riven asunder.'<sup>1</sup>

If facts and values be at root one, it will follow, as a corollary, that Ritschl is incorrect in limiting religious knowledge to judgements of value, nor can Herrmann be endorsed when he asserts that it is a matter of indifference to religion whether philosophy be deistic, pantheistic, or theistic.<sup>2</sup> The Ritschlians, by their treatment of the subject, have sometimes fostered an impression that there is, in contrast with the theoretical judgement, something essentially and distinctively religious in the value-judgement. That is partly because Ritschl was only interested in ethical and religious value-judgements, and for him ethics and religion were almost the same. There are numberless aesthetic value-judgements, however, and the value-judgement is the vehicle not exclusively of spiritual knowledge, but also of general knowledge. Religious knowledge lends itself especially to value-judgements, but all religious knowledge is not in value-judgements any more than all value-judgements are religious knowledge. Just because it is impossible wholly to separate theoretical judgements and value-judgements will it be

<sup>1</sup> *Contemporary Theology and Theism*, p. 118.

<sup>2</sup> *Die Metaphysik in der Theologie*, p. 21.

expected that religious knowledge will overlap into the other class. The heart of religion is personal experience :

What we have felt and seen  
With confidence we tell.

Such experience is that which is most essentially religious in religion, and all personal experience is expressed in value-judgements ; but when religious experience seeks to explain itself it travels beyond the sphere of the value-judgement, seeking to connect what it discovers and regards as objective truth with all other knowledge.

None the less is it to be recognized that, in so doing, religion is not likely to find more but rather less assurance. The certainty of religion is in its value-judgements. Religious knowledge is provisional when it goes beyond that sphere. Such theology as is expressed in theoretical judgements is speculative, and must be always subject to re-statement. The reaction against the use of the theoretical judgement in the expression of religious knowledge has arisen from the fact that too often such knowledge, instead of being regarded as tentative, has been set up as eternal and necessary truth. Speculative theology, in so far as it embodies the best and clearest explanation of religious experience, in so far as it unites religious experience and its data harmoniously within the complete world-view, is not to be decried as invalid or worthless. It is of utility as well as of interest. None the less the certainties of religion are individually experienced and expressed in individual value-judgements, and,



whilst theoretical judgements may be employed, they must always be regarded as secondary. The conclusion, therefore, would point to the fact that, in so far as religion is a matter of personal experience, it is expressed in value-judgements ; at the same time it is straining words to deny that the explanation of such experience is religious knowledge, and such explanation carries us beyond value-judgements.

It is impossible, therefore, to adopt the limitation of Ritschl and confine religious knowledge solely to value-judgements ; in the first place because value-judgements cannot be separated entirely, but only artificially, from theoretical judgements, in the second place because even this can only be effected by the presumption that religion is not concerned with what God or the world is, but only with the practical meaning that God or the world has for us. That is to confuse religion with conduct. Certain moralists accept the idea of ethics as unconcerned with either origins or ends, as merely the science of conduct under given and accepted conditions. Ritschl's view of religion is similar, but it is impractical. Religion is far too important in its issues to be cast off in such a manner from ontology, and, because of its importance, it is bound to seek a foothold in the general plan of all, and it will take more power than that of Ritschl to prevent religion from the effort to connect itself with what is and was and will be. Religion, Ritschl is right in declaring, does not need to go begging to metaphysics for justification, but it does need to join all our knowledge in co-ordination, and hence to pass from value-judgements strictly so called.



Somewhat elaborate distinctions between various kinds of value-judgements have been drawn by Reischle and others, but to enter into them will not lead to any fuller appreciation of its main function. It is of more interest to notice that the modern and oft-quoted 'argument from experience' is derived from the value-judgement, and sustained by historical corroboration. As such its present vogue must be largely attributed to the indirect influence of Ritschl. The believer appeals to his own experience and that of others, independently of theoretical considerations. It is an appeal to personal value-judgements, not to formal proofs; it is established by the witness history affords to the conservation of values through time, and to the persistence and similarity of men's valuations, not by a chain of theological reasons. Ritschl well recognizes the support that history affords to experience in supplying subjective value-judgements with an objective perspective, for, if it be asserted that the truth of the value-judgement cannot be demonstrated logically, history supplies a proof that the value-judgements of religion are not isolated nor peculiar to him who judges, but recurrent and persistent through time. The 'argument from experience' has gained much from Ritschl.

In conclusion, it may be acknowledged that religious philosophy owes to Ritschl, not the discovery but rather the ratification of three facts: firstly, the use and place of the value-judgement; secondly, the validation of the value-judgement as possessing equal authority with the theoretical judgement; thirdly, the manifestation of a certain

and unchallenged ground for religious knowledge. That ground may not be, as Ritschl thought it was, the sole territory which religious knowledge needs; but as the ground which the citadel of religion, personal experience, occupies, Ritschl secures that which is most certain and most essential in religion.

The importance of this, and the place it holds in modern philosophy of religion, especially in Pragmatism and the various types of Personalism, will be seen later. It but remains to acknowledge the debt that is owing to Ritschl and his followers, as well as to Lotze, in this respect. Such acknowledgment has not always been made as frankly or as frequently as it should have been, partly perhaps because it might seem to be some kind of endorsement of the much-disputed Ritschlian theology. But to be restrained by such a fear is unjust and ungenerous to one who has laid religious philosophy under no inconsiderable obligation.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TRANSCENDENTAL PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION: THE NEO-HEGELIANS

#### § 1. *Hegel and the Neo-Hegelians*

ALTHOUGH that philosophical method which it is usual to style transcendental originated with Kant, a better example of transcendentalism in religious philosophy is afforded by Hegel and his followers, starting with the former's *Philosophie der Religion*, when the treatment of religion from the standpoint of Absolute Idealism issues, it is needless to say, in conclusions widely different from those of Kant.

As a definite school, however, Hegelianism is, and has long since been, defunct in Germany. A similar fate is overtaking the modified Hegelianism that once was powerful in our own country. The influence of these British advocates, the Neo-Hegelians, to adopt a common designation, is none the less still felt, and that, for one reason, renders it more fitting that they, rather than Hegel himself, should appear as representative of the transcendental methods in this survey. Although the term 'Neo-Hegelian' includes other than British writers, some Americans and still a few Germans,

England and Scotland (the latter especially) are the head quarters of the movement.

A second reason supports this course. Hegel has been claimed as the 'true founder' of the philosophy of religion.<sup>1</sup> In so far as that honour can be claimed by any one individual, it has here been bestowed upon a contemporary but earlier writer, Schleiermacher,<sup>2</sup> for though the services of Hegel to religious philosophy, especially in the historical and comparative treatment of religion, are undeniable, his treatment of the subject, in the sense in which it has been here contended that religious philosophy should be understood, is radically defective. Though realizing that religion is primarily spiritual experience, he fails to see its value and significance as such, and wishes to translate it into philosophy in order to arrive at its purest expression. Schleiermacher makes no such error, clearly distinguishing religion from philosophy, science, ethics, the Church, dogma, and all else with which it may be connected but must not be confused. The great Hegelian equation of the real and the rational, Being = Thought, necessarily embodies religion as a province of the kingdom of philosophy, and though religion receives at Hegel's hand a very complete and separate treatment, such separation is actually a matter of convenience and arrangement rather than a basal distinction.

Concerning the ultimate unity of religion and philosophy Hegel has no hesitation. He expressly

<sup>1</sup> By De La Saussaye, *Science of Religion*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> The attention Hegel devotes to religion was no doubt the more because of the influence of Schleiermacher's *Reden*.

states that philosophy, in unfolding itself, unfolds religion. 'Thus religion and philosophy come to be one. Philosophy is in fact worship, it is religion. . . . Philosophy is thus identical with religion.'<sup>1</sup> The difference is simply in this, that whereas the other parts of philosophy have God as their result, religion has God as its beginning. They are thus merely different ways of looking at the same thing, religious philosophy being a reversal of the position of general philosophy. The one goes from right to left, the other from left to right, but both cover the same ground. Philosophy, for Hegel, is the logical contemplation of the absolute Idea in its determinate character as pure thought, a coldly severe line-drawing of the universe. Religion publishes a coloured map of the same thing, more attractive perhaps, but still not adding anything truly essential to the impassive self-unfolding of the logical Absolute.

In other words, whilst in the term 'philosophy of religion' emphasis here has been laid on the word 'religion,' Hegel lays stress on the word 'philosophy.' For him religion can be the highest philosophy, but not a thing apart, independent of philosophy. From this it follows that Hegel does not really afford a *prima facie* type of religious philosophy, in the sense here attached to that term, but rather a type of philosophical religion.

To rule out altogether upon these grounds the mode of thought that Hegel represents would, however, be arbitrary, and would logically result in the omission of other theories which are reviewed in

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. trans., vol i. pp. 19, 20.

this survey. But this consideration affords fresh reason for exemplifying the transcendental method by reference to the Neo-Hegelians, particularly the brothers Caird, rather than by Hegel himself. In them the philosophical rigorism of Hegel is somewhat abated, and, though using the implements of Hegelianism, they come nearer to the requirements of a specially religious philosophy than their master. Speaking generally, the main difference between the Neo-Hegelians and Hegel lies in this, that less stress is laid by them upon the unity of religion and philosophy, less is made of the reconstruction of dogma, less confidence is put in the rigid application of the dialectic. On the other hand, rather more attention is given to the personal and devotional significance of religion, and, with the greatly increased knowledge of modern times, better use is made of the treatment of history and the development of a general principle throughout it, culminating in Christianity.

Dr. Caird<sup>1</sup> is not certain of the appropriateness of describing his talented brother as a Hegelian, and prefers to speak of a Neo-Kantian movement. There are few who can accept the designations commonly ascribed to them, and perhaps it is natural that it should be so. The strong influence of Hegel upon both brothers, even though it may be allowed that they develop and not merely expound his position, is sufficient evidence, however, for

<sup>1</sup> See his Introduction to *Fundamental Ideas of Christianity* and to *Essays in Philosophical Criticism*. Cf. however, Principal Caird's own statement in the preface of his *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*.

accepting the common classification without discussing nice questions of its exact preciseness. Principal Caird's (John Caird's) *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* and *Fundamental Ideas of Christianity* and Dr. Caird's (Edward Caird's) *Evolution of Religion* are the best commentaries upon Hegel's *Philosophy of Religion*. Amongst other theologians, Pfleiderer is, though not by any means wholly, yet in the main Hegelian. In ethical and metaphysical directions the best-known exponents of Hegel's influence are T. H. Green, William Wallace, D. G. Ritchie, and Hutchison Stirling. Dr. McTaggart is an admirable expository critic. Professor Seth (Pringle Pattison) is an ex-Hegelian, now a forceful critic of the system; and Mr. F. H. Bradley, having begun in Hegel, has now drifted into a separate, though not dissimilar, position. The term Neo-Hegelian must therefore be cautiously employed, as both wide and loose; but, as far as its religious aspect is concerned, it is safe to select the brothers Caird as its best representatives.

## § 2. *The Hegelian Conception of Religion*

The account which is afforded by Hegel and his followers of the nature of religion follows naturally and necessarily from the general principles of the dialectic. The latter, as such, lie beyond the present scope, and, as they have found many expositors and are widely known, it will not be necessary to enter into them, but merely to remember that they involve the expectancy that any conception of religion congruous with them will be pre-eminently



an intellectual one, and that of the trinity feeling, will, and reason, the last named will bear the sceptre. Religion, declares Hegel, is 'consciousness of the absolute truth,'<sup>1</sup> the truth that exists on its own account, differing, as has already been noticed, from philosophy rather in point of view than in its nature. 'The basis of religion,' says Principal Caird, 'lies in the very essence of man's nature *as a thinking, self-conscious being.*'<sup>2</sup>

Though seating religion in man's intellect, neither Hegel nor his followers have entirely ignored the emotional and volitional sides of man's nature. Hegel is willing to admit that the being of God is immediately exhibited in feeling, but not as free and independent being in and for self. Feeling is trivial and indefinite; it does not guarantee its contents; to attain any definite determination of God it is needful to pass from feeling to thought. Similarly Principal Caird, after pointing out the incapacity of mere feeling, uninterpreted by thought, to give anything that our consciousness can utilize, argues that, as knowledge controls feeling, and constitutes the principle by which it is assessed, the primacy in religion belongs to thought. Feeling may be necessary—it is, indeed, at the base of all consciousness—but it is not by the intensity of feeling so much as by the character of its consciousness that a religion is to be estimated.

When it is asked what kind of knowledge it is

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy of Religion*, vol. 1. p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 151. The italics are mine. Reference is made throughout to the 1904 edition.

that constitutes the truest religious consciousness, the distinction that Hegel draws between *Vorstellung* and *Begriff* comes into play. These terms, which are not exactly to be expressed by any English equivalents (especially as regards the former), are to be understood as characteristic respectively of untutored, ordinary, popular ideas, and of the pure thought, the refined and clarified notions, of philosophy. The ordinary ideas of religion are not *Begriffe*, but *Vorstellungen*. They are representations only of reality, and may be likened to the achievement of an artist who represents truth in pictorial form. Even so religion, akin to art, expresses truth in a representative form, in a spiritual picture.

Religious concepts, therefore, in their ordinary form are *Vorstellungen*. But as such they are inadequate, stained with the clay of the pit from whence they are hewn. They are defective in that they are metaphorical, abstract, and self-contradictory.<sup>1</sup> They are metaphorical because they represent spiritual truth in the vocabulary of material objects; abstract because they can give no unity to the multiplicity of their objects; self-contradictory because they do not solve the antinomies, paradoxes, and contradictions of thought, the antitheses of self and not-self, mind and matter, freedom and necessity, finite and infinite.

From the Hegelian standpoint, accordingly, the task of the philosophy of religion is to translate *Vorstellungen* into *Begriffe*. This is accomplished by the usual Hegelian method—thesis, antithesis,

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 180.

and synthesis, resolving opposition into a higher unity which embraces both sides. Principal Caird illustrates the process<sup>1</sup> by contending that the opposition between nature and the finite mind is resolved by uniting both in a synthesis which reveals them, not as fixed and independent realities, but as two members of one organic whole, where it is recognized that nature is 'but the reflection of mind, and that mind discovers itself in nature *tanquam in speculo*.' Such a synthesis, 'the universal life of reason,' constitutes the truth and reality of both.

In a similar manner Principal Caird seeks the solution of the further problem, the relation of the finite mind to God. The results of dwelling exclusively on one or other side of the antithesis are described as a Scepticism (not very appropriately designated as Anthropomorphism), which reduces the Deity to a subjective illusion, and Pantheism, respectively. The synthesis proposed is to exhibit both as members of one organic unity, separate only by abstraction.

A previous chapter<sup>2</sup> has afforded Principal Caird the opportunity of finding the basis of religion in two facts pertaining to the spiritual nature of man : firstly, the capacity of transcending his own individuality, which carries with it the impulse to do so ; and secondly, the consciousness, latent or implicit, of an absolute self-consciousness, the unity of thought and being upon which the finite is grounded, and in which this impulse finds its meaning. This,

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 222 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Ch. iv.

it is supposed, is virtually involved in man's spiritual nature, and is further supported by the well-known Hegelian dictum that knowledge of a limit is virtual, and in a sense actual, transcendence of that limit. The ultimate unity of the finite and infinite which is now to be sought will, it is argued, further explain this basis of religion by showing that finite spirit is intelligible only in the light of infinite spirit, and that the latter is necessarily in organic relation to the former.

To support the contention that finite spirit presupposes infinite spirit, resort is made to another assumption—that all thought necessitates the supposition of an absolute and objective criterion of thought. The question of the nature of this criterion 'cannot be answered directly,' but from what Principal Caird calls 'the general point of view in which we here contemplate the subject' (that is to say, the Hegelio-religious standpoint), he is confident that he can prove—although it is surely an assumption which may or may not be justified but not a proof—that its nature is that of absolute spirit, and characteristically he adds 'or intelligence.' By union with this, just in so far as it is effected, can finite spirit realize itself, and in so losing itself the finite spirit is to find its true and highest self, for the absolute spirit is conceived, not as foreign to but as a necessity of, and implied in, the nature of the finite spirit. It is the philosophical counterpart of the 'Christ who dwelleth in us.'

On the other hand, infinite spirit must be in relation to and contain finite spirit, and, just as the

nature of the finite presupposes the infinite, so must the infinite, not arbitrarily, but naturally, be related to, and the ground of, the finite. The infinite, therefore, from the religious view-point, cannot be merely self-identical being, if for no other reason than this, that a self-identical being, as Principal Caird points out, would lack one of the most essential of spiritual attributes—love.

The conclusion is, therefore, that the Infinite is God as Absolute Spirit, which from the Hegelian standpoint is the same as thought, or self-conscious mind. All other categories are held to be of the finite only. As absolute spirit it is claimed that a self, determined without external limitation, is yielded, and the world and man afforded a reality neither merged in God nor yet existing as a limit to His infinity. Such reality is never lost in God, but since it is only realized by self-surrender, it cannot be independent of God. The conclusion is essentially characteristic of Hegelianism, and bears all the marks of Hegel's ingenuity in claiming to unify all antinomies, even that of a finite and an infinite, one and yet separate, distinct and yet identical.

### § 3. *The Place of History in Religion*

If Schleiermacher rather than Hegel is to be regarded as the pioneer of the modern conception of the function of religious philosophy, Hegel possesses the merit of having attempted one of the earliest scientific examinations of historical religions. Though now obsolete, his classification

was a great advance upon that of Schleiermacher; and though his observations on this topic have little modern value, he must yet be regarded as one of the founders of the comparative study of religions.

To this study Hegel was led by the requirements of his method. Regarding history as the manifestation of the process of the Absolute, he desires to trace that process, and exhibit it in the history in which it is revealed. Accordingly, having analysed the fundamental idea of religion, he proceeds to the examination of history to inquire how far the historical religions have exhibited the idea, and to show the upward development which culminates in that philosophical type of Christianity he takes to be the corner-stone of the building. To this purpose a large part of his *Philosophie der Religion* is devoted. A threefold division is suggested: the religion of nature, which emphasizes in varying degrees and manners the infinite; the religion of spiritual individuality, which emphasizes the individual; and finally comes the inevitable synthesis, Christianity, the absolute religion, where the infinite and individual are joined in a unity that transcends their differences. Hegel's first group includes savage religions and pantheistic religions, the latter including those of China, India, and Buddhism. Still within this group is a transition stage, the Parsee, Syrian, and Egyptian religions, which tend towards the second group. As spiritual religions, those of Israel, Greece, and Rome are named.

Dr. E. Caird, in his *Evolution of Religion*, speaks

of objective, subjective, and absolute religion, in similar terms of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. In objective religion God is one object amongst others, a polytheism that moves through Pantheism towards subjective religion. Buddhism and Stoicism are quoted as examples of subjective religion, with the religion of Israel as its highest form. Finally comes the synthesis in Christianity. With the additional material of more than a century behind it, Dr. Caird's investigation is naturally most scientific; but, like Hegel's, it is a simple division based on an *a priori* conception, and therefore is bound to be in some sense artificial.

The significance of both attempts, however, is not only in themselves as contributions to the comparative study of religion, but as witnesses to the function of history in the Hegelian philosophy of religion. This function Principal Caird illustrates,<sup>1</sup> beginning with the assertion that the individual can only be understood by his relation to the whole, not only his present relation, but his historic relation. In such a way must be treated the study of language, art, politics, and philosophy. Religion is not otherwise, and history reveals the successive steps by which man has risen above the finite. Moreover, the process is the guarantee of the result, and the result is grasped in proportion as its history can be realized. Accordingly, the development of the idea of God elucidates that idea. History may be said, therefore, to afford a kind of ready-made philosophy of religion, the significance of which philosophy must determine.

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, ch. x.



It was for these reasons that Hegel attached great importance to the history both of religion and of dogma. He laments that too often the historical treatment of dogmas deals with them as 'truths which *were* truths,' instead of regarding them as the forms in which from age to age the absolute truth of religion has been enshrined. Though the shrine decay the truth remains, and the history of dogma is the story of the process of truth. In the second place, the history of dogma and of religion is to be regarded as a corrective subduing subjective religious eccentricities, and, moreover, it forms a basis for any re-statements which may be attempted. Thus does history serve philosophy.

On the other hand, philosophy serves history. Principal Caird's axiom of an absolute criterion implied in thought has already been noticed. A similar state of things, he claims, exists in religion. Though religion, as an abstract idea apart from the positive religions, does not exist, the positive facts of religion have meaning as religious only in so far as the ideal of religion expresses itself in them. This may be granted without involving the consequence, however, which the Hegelians deduce, that such an ideal cannot be obtained by appeal to the facts, nor yet by the organized science of the facts, but only by philosophy.

On this plea, however, the Hegelians proceed to utilize their criterion as the only basis upon which religions can be properly classified, compared, and judged, and hence justify the avowed purpose of examining historical religion to reveal the process

of the determining idea which has been abstractly gained from philosophy.

#### § 4. *Doctrine of God, Morality, Freedom*

Like Hegel, the Neo-Hegelians set forth their doctrine of God unquestioningly as the Christian doctrine. The developing idea is traced through the various religions to its culmination in the absolute religion, Christianity. All religions share in eternal truth; Christianity alone is the perfect expression of that truth. Given implicitly in Christ, it becomes explicit in the Christian consciousness. The history of dogma is regarded as proceeding through thesis of doctrine, antithesis of heresy, to synthesis of truth, and Hegelianism, therefore, claims to be the clarified expression of the truth of the absolute religion.

Hegel, it is well known, made the doctrine of the Trinity the corner-stone of Christianity and the highest doctrine of religion. It is evidently more congruous with his own speculation than either the historic Incarnation or Atonement, the full significance of which it is very difficult to reconcile with his theory. Though the doctrine of the Trinity affords Hegel the spectacle of a differentiation resolved into a higher unity, it cannot, religiously speaking, be regarded as the apex of Christian truth, and gives further proof of the philosophical and theoretical character of Hegel's estimate of religion. Later Hegelians depart from their master in some degree at this point. Principal

Caird<sup>1</sup> sees in the doctrine a denial of the conception of God as an abstract, self-identical being, an example of differentiation in unity, and a ground for predicating that God is love; but the doctrine is not urged to the same extent as by Hegel.

Dr. Caird,<sup>2</sup> following the perennial procedure of the Hegelians, finds closely connected in our conscious life three ideas: a thesis, self; an antithesis, not-self; and a synthesis, God. The idea of God is accordingly described as 'the ultimate presupposition of our consciousness.' It will be noticed that Dr. Caird's is not the psychological method which likewise discovers self, not-self, and God in consciousness, but is similar in some degree to that of Lotze, who, possibly by reason of his early Hegelianism, identifies God with the principle of unity. Like Lotze, Dr. Caird wishes to demonstrate the necessity of God, as the essential principle of rational consciousness, to show that man's rationality can be interpreted as religious, that 'the principle out of which the consciousness of God arises is as truly one of the primary elements of our intelligence as the consciousness of the object or the consciousness of the self.'<sup>3</sup> This is characteristic of the Neo-Hegelian conception of God; its truth depends upon the identification which Dr. Caird takes for granted, without warrant, that God is the principle of the unity of consciousness.

This identification is not discussed, however. The only objection that Dr. Caird considers is that it is not clearly understood in all men's knowledge,

<sup>1</sup> *Fundamental Ideas of Christianity*, ch. iii.

<sup>2</sup> *Evolution of Religion*, p. 64.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 84.

nor manifestly revealed throughout the history of religion. This is admitted, but it is contended that a consciousness of an infinite unity is actually implicit, though in a form more or less developed, in all religions.

The relation between religion and morality is set forth by Principal Caird<sup>1</sup> in this manner : Man's life is divided between opposing tendencies, each of which, because related to the permanent and conscious self, is equivalent to a self. The lower tendencies, which in animals are merely appetites, in man war against the higher and rational self, and seek to identify him with themselves. To this discord between appetite and reason, sense and spirit, morality supplies a solution by introducing a new principle, identifying the self, not with the narrow ring of its own desires and interests, but with the wider circle of corporate life, with its accompanying responsibilities and duties. This reveals the true character of the lower and selfish impulses, to which otherwise man would not awake, and subdues them, not by annihilating but by transforming them, so that they are made to serve and express the new point of view which rationalizes and ennobles them.

Still, this solution is only partial. Morality can only give a continued approximation to the ideal. It progresses indefinitely, but does not reach the infinite. Religion, however, enables man to transcend the finite and attain the infinite, and religion accordingly must be regarded as the perfecting of morality.

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, ch. ix.

In connexion with morality the question of freedom arises. Whilst Hegelianism is generally thought of as thorough-going determinism, it has been asserted that 'no thinker ever had more ample resources for asserting libertarianism than Hegel.'<sup>1</sup> The statement is really based upon the well-known elasticity of Hegelianism in embracing contradictions. It is difficult, however, to see how the Hegelian method, which theoretically can enclose all antinomies, would work practically if real self-causality were admitted. The very fact that neither Hegel nor his followers make the alleged possibility actual is evidence that the system is not germane to it. Moreover, the question is not what Hegelianism might have taught, but what it does teach. This is characteristically set forth by Principal Caird.<sup>2</sup> He objects to the conception of absolute freedom as equivalent to absolute irresponsibility, though it is stated to be a necessary condition of responsibility. This is because he conceives that an absolutely free will is a will that is not determined by any moral character, and that without such determination no ethical estimate of its quality can be given. He denotes the good will as that which seeks the true end of its nature, the bad will as that which seeks lower ends. The true end is defined as self-realization by self-surrender to God. Such self-realization is the opposite of selfishness. By this, however, it is not meant that the lower ends are sinful necessarily. They may, and

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Mackintosh in *Hegel and Hegelianism*, p. 215 and elsewhere in the same volume.

<sup>2</sup> *Fundamental Ideas of Christianity*, ch. xi.

do, hold a right and proper place in man's life. Evil consists in giving to lower ends that which should be given to seeking the higher ends, for the higher ends can never be fulfilled through the lower.

The ultimate source of moral accountability, therefore, is in character. From character proceeds will as the expression of man's whole self. It is evident that character is not formed by free choices, since no such things exist. None the less the Neo-Hegelians consider themselves justified in speaking of freedom in a sense of their own. Man is 'free or self-determined, simply because his life and actions are the expression or realization of himself.'<sup>1</sup>

#### § 5. *Absolute Idealism and the Requirements of Religious Philosophy*

Brief though the foregoing account has proved to be, further statement of the absolute Idealist standpoint must be left aside in favour of some inquiry as to its adequacy as a religious philosophy, and possibly, in so doing, part of that which is lacking in exposition may incidentally be supplied.

By the attention given to the brothers Caird full justice has been done to the religious aspect of this type of thought. The rareness of spirit, the literary and devotional beauty of their writings, cast a glamour on the system they expound which it hardly merits, and their devotional temperament and language cloak with fine vesture the bareness of Hegel's Absolute. They do not, however, repre-

<sup>1</sup> *Fundamental Ideas of Christianity*, p. 56.

sent the only logical or actual development of Hegel's theories. From these have also sprung the irreligious and often anti-religious 'Hegelianism of the Left,' the philosophies of Feuerbach, Strauss, and others, and, in later times, though not directly, the abstruse and barren scepticism so cleverly stated by Mr. F. H. Bradley in *Appearance and Reality*, where the same Absolute, though not doing duty as God, appears more appropriately as an intangible metaphysical wraith, paradoxically labelled the sole reality. If the warm breath of the Cairds' religious feeling makes these dry bones live, or if the transparent purity of T. H. Green's ethical passion draws attention from the dubious metaphysical framework of his system, such attractions are added to, not inherent in the parent philosophy of Hegel.

Any complete criticism of this type of thought would necessarily involve a critical examination of the general philosophical principles of Hegel which lie at its base—a task which, besides having been fulfilled by abler hands, cannot be attempted in the space here available. Apart, however, from the question of the validity of Hegel's main contentions, it must be maintained that the radical defect of the religious philosophy presented in the works of both Principal and Dr. Caird is to be traced to this legacy from Hegel. They approach religion, its psychology, history, and experience, weighted with the bias of a previously-adopted philosophical theory. Whilst they, no more than Hegel himself, can be charged with disregard of the facts, they contemplate them always through lenses coloured



by the dialectic. Principal Caird, indeed, expressly defends this procedure by remarking that some principle of classification and comparison must be adopted, and that such principles must have reference to the essential idea of religion itself.<sup>1</sup> This essential idea has already been defined as the effort of man to transcend himself, the aspiration after an infinite unity. It may readily be granted that investigation must be systematic and methodical, but surely it is a *hysteron proteron* to select as the canon of interpretation the particular definition of a particular type of thought. It is open to grave doubt whether any review of the deliverances of religion, undertaken apart from the knowledge of Hegel's philosophy, would suggest any such effort and aspiration as being the *essence* of religion, even though it be a feature of importance in religion ; and, so far as I am aware, no thinker untrained in the Hegelian school has observed any such impulse at the heart of every religion. On such principles there must result as many interpretations of the facts of religion as there are philosophical theories. The principle of selection among the facts, which is to direct our observation of them, must first be sought in the facts themselves, not imported from without. However conscientious the investigator may be, it is impossible to review the facts impartially when seeking in them the exemplification of a previously adopted conviction, and there is accordingly an artificiality within the Neo-Hegelian treatment of religious history and experience which directly results from the unsoundness of the method

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 310, 312.

adopted. Instead of starting psychologically and historically with the direct data for the construction of a religious philosophy, the facts of religious experience and history, observing the interrelations and affinities which exist between them, and basing upon this such explanation as seems most adequate, the Neo-Hegelians begin with a philosophical theory, and end with what they had at the beginning—a philosophical theory and no more.

Apart, however, from this methodological weakness, it must also be noticed in this connexion that the Neo-Hegelian conception of religion is such as to allow little elasticity or variability to the religious consciousness. Principal Caird seems only to see in the subjective aspect of religion the sphere of caprice and waywardness, which must be elevated and dominated by the objective criterion of knowledge. The logical and consistent evolution of religion is not to be disturbed by what the biologist calls 'sports.' Yet from such subjective variations spring new centres and starting-points. The great movements of religion have almost all arisen from such subjectivities, which are discounted in a system too formally consistent to include the inconsistencies which load experience. To the Hegelian the variability of religion is insignificant, its uniformity only is of interest, a consideration more valuable to preconceived theory than to the interests of the investigation of religion.

The *a priori* character of the Hegelian philosophy of religion is further illustrated by the way in which the facts of experience are relentlessly driven through the inevitable process that recurs on

every possible occasion—thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Doubtless such a process is often to be discovered in experience, but it is by no means the sole and only engine of progress, and it is fairly worked to death by the enthusiastic application of the Hegelians. Can the interpretation of religious consciousness and religious history that proceeds by a wholesale application of any such philosophical maid-of-all-work be reckoned consistently dependable? <sup>1</sup> Can we be sure that reality is so constituted as to be most convenient for our theories? Facts are notoriously stubborn, and the facile manner in which they are put through the Hegelian machine, and come out stamped with its mark is, to say the least, suspicious. Our universal experience of the wellnigh insuperable difficulties of relating all the facts that are delivered in the rough state, makes it incredible that a magic has been discovered which solves all antinomies and smooths out all difficulties, without a hitch. Contradictory though it may seem, the very completeness of Hegelianism is the suspicion of its incompleteness, and prepares for the discovery that some facts are fitted to the theory rather than that the theory is fitted to all facts.

The entail from Hegel is responsible for a further defect in the Neo-Hegelian religious philosophy—its over-intellectualization. Hegel's reverence for religion in general, and Christianity in particular, was not for religion or for Christianity as such, but

<sup>1</sup> The one-sided critical views of Baur regarding the New Testament are an illustration of the dangers of this *a priori* method.

for religion and for Christianity as the highest form of philosophy. 'The contemplation of religion in thought,' as Hegel remarks significantly, 'has thus raised the determinate moments of religion to the rank of thoughts.'<sup>1</sup> This exceedingly intellectualist conception of the significance of religion bears fruit in the modified Hegelianism of the Cairds. By it they are debarred from doing full justice either to the emotional or the devotional aspects of religion; and, apart from these, the essential character of religion cannot be represented. Hegel was willing to allow that feeling is the primary form of consciousness, out of which knowledge develops; but knowledge, like the self-made son of a humble parent, is ashamed of its progenitor, and, adopting a ready-made coat of arms, declares that the family history is now about to begin. Principal Caird admits the place of feeling within the religious consciousness, together with reason and will, and protests against the psychological abstraction that treats any one of the three as if it were separable from the rest. Having, however, shown that knowledge is indispensable, he displays no further interest in its fellow-constituents, treating it as if it were the only element in the religious consciousness that is worthy of notice. Surely only the bias of an intellectualist philosophy can account for such a procedure! Granted that knowledge makes religion possible, is it possible apart from feeling or will? Why, then, this monopoly of one aspect? What is there to justify the positing of this one element of the trinity of con-

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. trans., vol. i. p. 23,

sciousness as essential? Might it not rather be contended that the subjective character of religion tends to emphasize the more subjective aspects of feeling and will? But the Neo-Hegelian, occupied with the objectivity of religion, makes little provision for that subjectivity which characterizes so strongly the concrete religious life. Principal Caird has a theory of religion which is, apart from all question, suitable to the philosophical preconceptions upon which it is based; but it will be difficult to contend that it is equally suitable to the explanation of the heterogeneous facts of religious life and history.

The inherent defects of the Hegelian intellectualism are perhaps most of all manifest in its doctrine of God. According to Principal Caird, in all thought 'we presuppose an absolute criterion of thought, an ideal of knowledge, an objective truth or reality, to which our thought must conform itself.'<sup>1</sup> This criterion is identified with infinite spirit, or mind. Dr. Caird, on the other hand, proceeds by contrasting as opposites the subject who perceives and the objects of its perception. These are bound together by a higher synthesis, identified with God. Two questions, therefore, arise: that of the validity of the inferences and that of the validity of the identification.

In the first place, as regards Principal Caird's inference, the implication of an absolute criterion must be doubted, for the simple reason that no guarantee can be offered either that thought does or does not conform to it. It is a gratuitous

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 233.

proceeding to invoke an abstract ideal to vouch for that which cannot be related to it. As far as Dr. Caird's inference is concerned, if such higher unity is to be known at all, it must be known as all other objects of knowledge are known. But that is precisely what it is not intended to be, and in that case it fails in its very function of being the unity that binds subject and object together. Yet, if it is not known at all, what possible good can come of assuming it?

Secondly, as regards the identification. Granting that finite consciousness may testify to God, does not the attempt to make the infinite, as God, the logical presupposition of the finite, share in the same incapacity as the 'proofs' of formal Theism? It is one thing to declare that God may be found in consciousness, another to make Him the necessary presupposition of consciousness. Principal Caird, like Hegel, sees in the ordinary theistic proof only a testimony to the impossibility of remaining in the finite, and the restless search which man's nature impels toward the infinite implicit in him; but will not recognize that his own procedure gives, and can give, nothing more.

Even if the inferences be allowed the identification is false. At most an abstract principle, and even then a hypothesis, not a necessity, is yielded, not the personal God of religion. For example, if Dr. Caird's higher unity is God, He must in turn distinguish Himself from His objects, and accordingly need a higher unity still to bind Him and them in one. Manifestly, then, it is not God, but the metaphysical Absolute that the inference maintains.



The Cairds are chary of the term, and speak rather of God, Infinite Thought, Spirit, Mind, endowing Him with personal and moral attributes—a course which disguises but does not alter the truth.

Hegel expressly states that the Absolute is God. God is the Absolute Reality. If such a statement is made it can neither be denied nor affirmed critically. All philosophy deals with some reality, and if that reality be called 'God' it is simply a question of terms. What can be asked is whether 'God' is to be understood in the religious or in the abstract sense.<sup>1</sup> The claim of Hegelianism to furnish a religious philosophy depends upon the validity of identifying the Absolute with God in the religious sense, and such identification is not only logically unnecessary but practically impossible upon Hegel's principles. It is true that Hegel conceived the Absolute as spiritual, and spirits exist as personal, but the unity of persons is not necessarily a person. Consequently some of the later disciples, as well as the critics of Hegel, have recognized in the Absolute an impersonal principle of unity, but not a personal and moral God. This is most flatly stated by Dr. McTaggart, who declares 'that the Absolute is not God, and that in consequence there is no God.'<sup>2</sup> This statement, which contains a well-founded truth and an unnecessary falsehood, is, however, on Hegelian principles, true in both parts.

Such a result is far from what Hegel and the Neo-Hegelians intend, but it is not easy to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. McTaggart, *Some Dogmas of Religion*, p. 187 seq.

<sup>2</sup> *Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 94.



see how their system can obviate it. Mr. F. H. Bradley expresses the same thing by saying that 'God is but an aspect, and that must mean but an appearance of the Absolute.'<sup>1</sup> Though the Absolute may, with the best of intentions, be called God, it is in effect a metaphysical principle possessed of none of the religious requisites of a Deity, and identified with God by convention, or on account of its pervasiveness, or, as one half suspects, because it is difficult to say what else it can be.

Such an issue is the direct result of over-estimated powers of reason in religious philosophy. It is no more possible to demonstrate logically the personality of God than His existence. Accordingly, the God who was to be revealed as the necessary implication of thought, turns out to be God in no sense that has value for religion. The personality of God, which was to be the crown, becomes the superfluity of the system ; what was to be necessary becomes an *accidens*. It is well to bear in mind, in any judgement that is passed upon Absolute Idealism as a religious philosophy, that the same principles which, in the hands of the Cairds, produce a theistic result, can more logically be developed into what is virtually an Atheism ; for the merely terminological device of calling the Absolute God implies nothing, and is, in its effect, only misleading.<sup>2</sup>

Turning to the personal aspect of religion, a further objection to Absolute Idealism as a re-

<sup>1</sup> *Appearance and Reality*, p. 448.

<sup>2</sup> For further consideration of the difficulties involved in the conception of the Absolute, cf. ch. vi. p. 183 seq.

ligious philosophy is revealed. Hegel's interest in this side of the question is scanty. The Neo-Hegelians, however, lay larger emphasis on the fact that the personal exercise of religion consists in the self-surrender of the finite to the infinite. It must be asked how far their principles intelligibly allow of this.

It is clear that the answer depends upon the question of personal freedom. The Hegelian self, like Kant's noumenal self, is metaphysically free, but such freedom is not moral freedom, for moral freedom implies a real power of causality in time and amongst phenomena. Hegelianism cannot and does not desire to find a place for such self-determination.<sup>1</sup> Principal Caird declares<sup>2</sup> that freedom in any sense save that in which he interprets it means the capacity for unmotivated action, a thing he regards as impossible and contradictory. It is difficult to understand what such a statement is intended to convey, unless it express the obvious contention that conduct which does not follow necessarily from pre-existing conditions is conduct which cannot be explained. But to argue, therefore, that such conduct is impossible, comes very near to begging the question. It must be understood that the point to be decided is not whether a free will is explicable: that may readily be settled. To be explicable, conduct would have to proceed from pre-existing conditions; that is to say, be determined strictly by its cause, like any other effect. The question at issue is rather this:

<sup>1</sup> Cf. however, *supra*, p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> *Fundamental Ideas of Christianity*, ch. vi.

whether the facts of mental and moral choice are not such as cannot be satisfactorily accounted for in the same manner as material things, but only adequately explained by the supposition that the will is free, even if such an admission makes conduct *ex facto* inexplicable. The assumption that underlies the objection against unmotivated choice is this: that what is incapable of explanation cannot be, and it is a false assumption. The belief in freedom is natural. It is negated at a later stage by presuppositions brought from the field of physical science into the mental and moral spheres, and there is perfect justification in contending that, however useful such suppositions are in their own field, they are not valid beyond it. Principal Caird's contention does not dispose of the case for free-will. It merely reasserts the Hegelian dictum that the real and the rational are one, that being can be wholly expressed in thought. Ultimate causality is itself inexplicable *ex hypothesi*, and there is no inherent impossibility in human causality sharing in the same characteristic.

Denying this, the Hegelians, nevertheless, assert that our conduct is still our 'own,' since it issues from and expresses our character. No libertarian contends that the will is unconditionally free. Character, heredity, circumstance are always influential factors. What is none the less asserted is that the will has the power to reveal its independence of all these, and to decide against the weight of influence, even though the power is comparatively seldom exercised, and sometimes so heavily mortgaged as to be practically lost. For

the Hegelians, who are what Professor James has wittily described as 'soft determinists,' character determines conduct without any such possibility. None the less, since our characters are our 'own,' our choices are properly to be so described.

This may not be intended as a quibble, but clearly it is not far removed from it. Character is determined by previous choices, which in turn were determined by others, and so on to infancy, before character develops, and to the ancestors from whom factors of character were inherited. All, however far back the matter is pushed, is within the bonds of necessity; and how character, fixed, not by anything I have initiated, but by a series of pre-determined conditions, whether it be 'mine' or not, is one for which I am morally responsible it is impossible to say. Principal Caird asserts that our character is ours, since it is not possessed by any other being. Precisely the same distinction may be made of any class of material objects. The murderer's character is his 'own' in this sense, and that of his knife is also its 'own'—it belongs to no other material object save knives. It may be asserted that the murderer is conscious of his character, but since such consciousness is strictly determined likewise, it forms no ground morally to differentiate.

In the face of this, to speak of the realization of the religious life by 'self-surrender' seems strangely anomalous. 'As a thinking being, it is possible for me to suppress and quell in my consciousness every movement of self-assertion, every notion and opinion that is merely mine, every desire that

belongs to me as this particular self, and to become the pure medium of a thought or intelligence that is universal—in one word, to live no more my own life, but let my consciousness become possessed and suffused by the infinite and eternal life of spirit.’<sup>1</sup> The language is that of freedom, but the process is, on Hegelian principles, as inevitable as the return of the river to the sea. Why such an act should be religious, or ‘self’-surrendering, any more than in the case of any mechanical or material process, the Hegelian may assert, but certainly cannot intelligibly make good.

Professor Pringle Pattison, in the striking phrase previously quoted, refers to ‘the almost insuperable difficulty of finding room in the universe for God *and* man.’<sup>2</sup> He urges that the Hegelian common self-consciousness embraces both the divine and the human. At one moment it is God’s; then the pendulum reverts and it is man’s; but being both, in the religious sense it ceases truly to be either. Hegel, however, manages the alternation so skilfully ‘that it appears to be not alternation but union.’<sup>3</sup>

It must certainly be allowed that there is confusion. The ‘thought’ which is specified is either divine or human. The Hegelians of the Left chose the latter, and developed it even to Atheism. The Hegelians of the Right, and most of the Neo-Hegelians,<sup>4</sup> assume that it is God’s thought, and that somehow, in sharing it, man shares God’s

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> *Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 154.      <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 156.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Caird proceeds somewhat differently, cf. p. 146. The result, however, is virtually the same.

being. Strictly speaking, the former attitude seems more logical. The Hegelian theory is based upon analysis of experience which is, for each, *his* experience, unified by his self-conscious ego. To this experience the universal self-consciousness, which is supposed to unify all experience, is strictly an object. Pushed to its extreme, this can only end in solipsism. To avoid this, the human self-consciousness and the divine are merged, and the issue is, to all intents and purposes, Pantheism.

The result is inevitable. Any philosophy which loses the independence and true selfhood of man is bound to issue in Pantheism. Whether the term Pantheism is to be applied to the Neo-Hegelians depends upon the significance in which it is taken. Professor Watson, for example, undertakes to prove <sup>1</sup> that speculative Idealism is not pantheistic. He succeeds in showing that it is not Spinozistic; but materialistic, or even Spinozistic, Pantheism is not the only type. Spinoza speaks of an indefinite 'substance,' and is usually denoted as a Pantheist. Hegel speaks of Infinite Spirit, and accordingly often gains credit as a Theist. But Hegel, and with him the Neo-Hegelians, know only one self—a self which embraces human and divine self-consciousness together; and though they speak of God and of man, both are ultimately aspects of one and the same self-consciousness. This universal self is spiritual, but none the less it is a spiritual Pantheism, and the question of the applicability of the name is a matter only of terminology. Hegelianism is at root pantheistic, though its spiritual character

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophical Basis of Religion*, p. 440 seq.



serves to disguise it sufficiently to enable it to utilize the language and conceptions of personal religion.

This latent Pantheism accounts for the inability of Absolute Idealism to furnish a satisfactory doctrine of sin or to meet the religious requirement of release from sin. Hegel's system is the apotheosis of the actual, and is never weaker than when attempting to deal with what ought and ought not to be. Upon its principles two ways are afforded of dealing with sin. Either it is the antithesis of one of the ubiquitous triads, resolved finally in a higher synthesis ; or else the irrational, and therefore the unreal. Dr. McTaggart<sup>1</sup> has shown that the former is Hegel's own view. This directly denies the general conviction of the religious consciousness, by interpreting sin as a phase in the making of good, and indeed a necessary phase, for virtue is thus based upon sin, and sin is by no means, therefore, wholly and irredeemably bad. The latter is obviously an evasion and not an explanation.

Principal Caird devotes four chapters of his *Fundamental Ideas of Christianity* to a discussion of the origin and nature of moral evil. It is, however, almost wholly critical, and constructively is disappointing in declaring that sin is selfishness, the spirit opposed to true self-realization, but making no attempt further to account for the great enigma.

A like unsatisfactoriness besets the pronouncement of Absolute Idealism upon immortality. Dr. McTaggart<sup>2</sup> inclines to the belief that some

<sup>1</sup> *Hegelian Cosmology*, ch. vi.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* ch. ii., and cf. *Some Dogmas of Religion*, ch. iii.



provision can be made for immortality upon Hegel's principles on the ground that selves are fundamental differentiations of the Absolute, and as such do not change. Though this argument will apply to pre-existence as well as to post-existence, he does not consider that a valid objection.<sup>1</sup> The Neo-Hegelians place the Universal Self out of time, but this abstract entity is no guarantee of what, rightly or wrongly, religion has always hoped for, a futurity for the individual. Rather does it promise a kind of joint-stock immortality when it still may be contended that 'I am,' and yet I am not I. The matter may not be important, as it is probable that philosophical considerations have little weight in either direction upon the belief in immortality; but immortality in the religious sense can only find a place in a system where personality has also a proper place, and the ambiguity and uncertainty of Hegelianism upon the question is the direct result of its treatment of personality, human and divine.

One other point remains to be noticed—the relation of the dialectic to the time-process. The growth of evolutionist theories has produced an unsettling effect upon Hegelian conceptions. At first Darwinism appeared as a welcome ally, but, despite several attempts<sup>2</sup> at the assimilation of the two, it has been increasingly recognized that Darwinism, with its conception of an evolution carried on by the struggle for existence, is hostile to the smooth and logical process of the Hegelian idea,

<sup>1</sup> *Some Dogmas of Religion*, ch. iv.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Prof. Ritchie's *Darwin and Hegel*.

which develops serenely apart from the jolts and jars, the anomalies and oppositions of existence, revealing antinomies only gracefully to cover them again. Moreover, Darwinism is the assertion of an actual evolution in time, and time, as Dr. McTaggart is constrained to admit,<sup>1</sup> does not find reconciliation in the dialectic which cannot embrace the reality of a succession of events in time and the supposed eternal perfection of the Absolute Idea. Dr. McTaggart expresses a fervent hope that the customary higher synthesis will even here turn up at last, but fails to see where it is to come from—a poor comfort under the circumstances.

This incompatibility between the theory adopted by the Neo-Hegelians and the time-process, with its series of real and historic happenings, is of much importance in assessing the claims of Absolute Idealism to provide a religious philosophy. 'Philosophy,' says Principal Caird, 'may finally translate an evolution in time into a process of thought which transcends time, and of which the former is but the outward expression and symbol.'<sup>2</sup> Unlike Dr. McTaggart, he is not concerned with the possibility of this, nor does he explain how that which 'transcends time' can intelligibly be called a 'process.' Granting, however, that this is so and can be effected, the result must ultimately mean the denial of the real significance of events in time. The long and often painful course of life and religion becomes, in effect, a conjuring feat of the Absolute, for the whole business is per-

<sup>1</sup> *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic*, ch. v.

<sup>2</sup> *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 298.

formed in one timeless stroke. It may not deny the actuality of the process, but it assuredly robs it not only of its reality but of any conceivable reason for its ever happening. The dialectic, straining its wings, has traced an historic evolution, the unfolding of the Universal Self, of God. Now all this becomes strangely inconsequent, for the same self exists in perfection apart from it all. This may be called a translation, but it is, in effect, an obliteration; it may be intended to consolidate, in reality it fells the time-process like a house of cards.

Such an anti-climax may be attacked on philosophic grounds. It may also be defended upon them, by contending that it represents what is, the sole concern that philosophy can entertain. Nevertheless, it seriously violates the religious consciousness which attaches a real significance to events in time. For example, the religious self is the empirical self with an actual history in time. The Hegelian self is a timeless ideal principle of unity, which, so far as I am aware, has never been satisfactorily related to its empirical counterpart. Religion finds an eternal significance in historic events, such as the Incarnation and Atonement of Christian doctrine. Even the command that man shall find himself in the infinite is mocked by closing up the high endeavour as a timeless phase in that infinite. If philosophy judges this state of things logically possible, the religious consciousness protests its emotional and moral impossibility. Such a protest cannot be waved aside with a learned sneer. If philosophy cannot embrace all the convictions of our nature, it must not dismiss as illusory

what it cannot unfold. If the religious consciousness and philosophical conclusions do not agree, philosophy must either widen its basis or invalidate the deliverances of the religious consciousness. The latter course the Hegelian philosophy does not profess to take, and consequently it must be deemed unsuitable for the full expression of religion, which needs a wider scope than its intellectualism affords. Religion has established the right to believe, which involves the right to disbelieve—a right it may exercise, apart from the issue of the philosophical battle, against any theory which violates its deepest instincts, desires, and beliefs.

## CHAPTER V

### MYSTICISM AS A RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY: DR. INGE

#### § 1. *The Relation of Mysticism to Philosophy*

AT first sight Mysticism and philosophy might seem antithetical opposites. Personal in character, exclusive and ineffable in experience, Mysticism would appear to be the abandonment of the power of reason, not its ally. Historically, however, such has been by no means the case. Mysticism is revealed not only as a persistent and familiar feature in religion, but in several instances connected with philosophy, and often with distinctively intellectualist philosophy. Indeed, so stalwart an adherent of the rationalist method as Dr. McTaggart has declared that all true philosophy, both in its methods and final conclusions, must be mystical. The explanation of an alliance at first sight so surprising must be sought in the incompleteness of philosophical explanation. Whether it be the incompatibility of the many and the one, the relation of τὸ ὅν and τὸ μὴ ὅν, or of the Absolute and the individual, when the ragged edges will not heal, not a few have been drawn beyond the domain of thought in search of the last link to complete

the circle of explanation, and have waded into the deep of the mystical. So did Plotinus, such has been the expedient of many Oriental philosophies, and the same course is still pursued by some to-day, who, climbing to the topmost rung of their dialectical ladder, find that, though above the clouds, they are not in the heavens. If Mysticism may thus be called to the aid of philosophy, it is not surprising, in view of the relation between religion and Mysticism, to find that, in the large majority of historical instances, mystical philosophy has had a more or less religious character. In treating of Mysticism as a religious philosophy, the confinement of this survey to Western and modern theories necessitates the omission of Oriental mysticism, and inclines to the selection of recent Christian Mysticism, which, both by reason of more abundant material and greater interest, has prior claims upon attention. The limitation to Christian Mysticism is, however, more apparent than real, for Christian Mysticism runs back to a non-Christian source in the Neoplatonists, and through them to Greek, and possibly Oriental, Mysticism. From Plotinus the succession runs through a long line of mystics, mediaeval and modern, Dionysius, St. Teresa, St. Catherine of Siena, Suso, St. John of the Cross, Tauler, Eckhart, Swedenborg, and many more. In these, and in the historical, one had almost said professional, mystics generally, the absorbing interest is religious, not philosophical. Accordingly, other and later writers who, without being classified amongst the radical mystics, exhibit mystical elements in their theo-

logies or philosophies, are of greater interest to the philosophy of religion. Amongst these are the Cambridge Platonists, with others, such as William Law, Coleridge, Julius Hare, Emerson, and, amongst the theologians, F. D. Maurice, Westcott, W. S. Lilly, and Dr. Illingworth : together with Wordsworth and other poets. In selecting a representative writer, however, the choice is limited, as comparatively few of those who lean towards Mysticism have made any attempt systematically to connect it with philosophy. Dr. Inge, who possesses a well-merited reputation as a specialist in Mystical Theology, has, however, in *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, made an endeavour to outline the religious philosophy of Mysticism and to endorse it with approval. It is to him, therefore, that it is most natural to turn at this juncture. Next to the volume just mentioned, his *Christian Mysticism* will probably be found of most service in supplementing the references to the essentials of his position, together with the excellent introductory chapter in his *English Mystics*, and his most recent work, *Faith and its Psychology*.

## § 2. *Mysticism as a Religious Experience*

Like most general terms, Mysticism is an expression which has been used widely and vaguely. That, however, which may be taken as most generally characteristic of the mystic is his endeavour to apprehend or be united with God—that is to say, with the supreme object of religion or philosophy—in an immediate manner intuitively



realized.<sup>1</sup> From this it follows that such an experience is exclusively personal, is inexplicable, since, as immediate and intuitive, it cannot be resolved into a process with a genesis and development such as is required for purposes of explanation, and also its immediacy renders it, for its recipient, undeniable, a religion and philosophy in one.

Under the covering of the word may be distinguished—clearly, I think, but not absolutely, that is to say, not without some overlapping—three types—extreme, super-rational, and rational Mysticism.

*Extreme Mystics* are few. Not only do they separate wholly the mystical experience from all else, but they profess to have attained it on angels' wings, with no ladder of faith or works. In 'splendid isolation,' shut up in the glory of the revelations vouchsafed to them, they have no eyes or ears or tongue for the world, gaining nothing from and giving nothing to it. Their tendency is often to develop those morbid pathological aberrancies, which offer some extenuation for the strictures passed upon Mysticism by writers such as Nordau. This Mysticism can know no philosophy. It is not even a law to itself, for it knows no law. It ignores all experience save its own, dwelling in a solipsistic world, where even God and the mystic are no longer subject and object.

*Super-rational Mysticism*, on the other hand,

<sup>1</sup> It will be noticed that this is suggested as the most general characteristic, not as a definition of Mysticism, a term almost indefinable.

reaches its goal by a preparatory scale of religious or ascetic exercise, but, having done so, kicks down the ladder by declaring the mystical state thus reached above ordinary consciousness. To this class belong some of the historical, and especially the earlier mystics. They regard ordinary Christian experience as preliminary only, and Christ becomes a *paedagogos* to lead to mystical communion. To doctrine, history, worship, sacraments, they tend to become indifferent as merely external, and are apt increasingly to sever the subjective experience from the process by which it was preceded, as needless when once the fullness is gained, just as the chrysalis cocoon is useless to the moth that has burst from it. Such is the Mysticism that the Ritschlians have chiefly in mind in their condemnation.

Whether such mystical consciousness is different in kind from the consciousness accessible to psychology, or whether it should be attached to the subliminal or supraliminal consciousness, is a question scarcely to be decided in the present state of our knowledge. It is at least sufficiently frequent and well-marked to be regarded as a distinct and valid state. If it be inaccessible to investigation, it does not follow that it is to be denied or dismissed. At the same time, its freedom will only be gained at a high price, for it must remain in its isolation, unconnected with all other experience.

Super-rational Mysticism pure and simple cannot even formulate its own theology. Not only do the utterances of the mystics lack unanimity, but compatibility, and if they should be co-ordinated and classified they would find little

acceptance even among mystics, being at best an attempt to translate incommunicable experiences.

None the less, to the mystic himself his Mysticism is both a religion and a philosophy. Though incommunicable, it is not so because it is a vague feeling, the mystery-mongering which is more properly called 'misticism,' but because it is too real to be translated into words, a dazzlingly luminous revelation of theological and metaphysical truth. A certain parallel is afforded by the common experience of 'feeling' a certain thing to be correct, though totally unable to justify the belief by reasons. Such convictions are, none the less, often stronger than logical conclusions. The super-rational mystic enjoys personal certainty, but is not able to utilize his revelations to elucidate the ordinary problems of religion. He is, accordingly, an object of interest rather to religious psychology than to religious philosophy.

Upon such grounds, therefore, he must be left, protected from trespass and not allowed to trespass. To attack the self-sufficient or unphilosophical mystic by exhibiting the tendency of Mysticism to shade off into morbid pathology, whilst a justifiable warning against excess, is an impertinence if regarded as a reason for disallowing mystical experience. Still, it must be admitted that more than one mystic, exalted beyond measure by the abundance of the revelations given unto him, has needed a corrective thorn in the flesh, if not the more serious alternative, to buffet him back to reason. There is no consideration, theoretical or practical, why mystical consciousness should be

preferred to normal consciousness. Each is wise if it respect the sphere of the other.

*Rational Mysticism* indicates a type towards which some of the greater mystics have tended. More especially is it characteristic of later or post-Reformation Mysticism, and is in favour at the present time with many thoughtful and devotional minds. It does not represent Mysticism as other than a function of normal consciousness, and would relate it definitely to religious philosophy. It is, therefore, the aspect of Mysticism which alone is of concern in this survey.

The relation of such Mysticism to a philosophy of religious experience is one of similarity and of difference. Both admit that a personal experience is the soul and centre of religion, both acknowledge it to be mystical. The difference is of degrees rather than quality, and concerns the method of dealing with such an experience. To the mystical philosophy of religion it forms a bridge to cross the gap where philosophy halts, and connect the Absolute and the relative, the One and the all. The philosophy of religious experience bases itself on the common data of the religious experience in general; and, whilst ready to admit an incommunicable and mystical element in all true personal religion, refuses to utilize it to underpin a particular theory, which without it is in danger of collapse. To it mystical experience is not directly matter for religious philosophy; it is rather personal 'over-belief' or over-experience. The mystical philosopher completes his theory in an extraordinary experience. The philosopher,

whose ground is personal experience, bases his on an ordinary experience. Such an ordinary experience is, in its depth, no doubt mystical, but it is not to its mystical character as such that appeal is made. In fine, both methods deal with a religious experience which, just because it is religious experience, has a mystical character. The one method, however, bases explanation upon the general and common features of this experience. The other endeavours to culminate explanation in its rarer and more intangible expressions.

Before passing to the consideration of this type of religious philosophy, it may be noticed that all mystics are at one in placing mystical experience at the summit of religion, and amongst super-rational and rational mystics there is a fairly general agreement as to the preparatory stages that precede the mystical consummation. Plotinus recognized a twofold aspect of virtue, negative or cathartic, and positive—the virtue that ‘intel-ligizes’ the soul. So generally the mystics recognize a purificatory stage, accompanied, according to the opinion of many but not all mystics, by ascetic exercises, and an illuminative stage, which is subsequent to the former stage, but prior to the consummation of mystical union.

It is popularly supposed that ecstasies and kindred phenomena are an integral part of Mysticism. Not a few of the mystics, however, have disparaged as secondary, and even discouraged as dangerous, the reception of such visions. The question is one that may be left for the mystical to debate amongst themselves, for, even granting

the possibility and verity of such states, they can in no way bear upon the philosophical aspect of Mysticism that is open to investigation.

### § 3. *Dr. Inge's Presentation of a Mystical Philosophy*

That Dr. Inge is to be numbered amongst the 'rational' mystics is clear from his statement that 'there is no separate organ for the apprehension of divine truth, independent of will, feeling, and thought. Our knowledge of God comes to us in the interplay of those faculties.'<sup>1</sup> Indeed, it is remarked that any revelation supposed to come through other channels would be intrinsically unintelligible. Divine truth is apprehended by the 'higher reason,' which is to be distinguished from the understanding because it includes 'the will and feelings disciplined under the guidance of the intellect.' Hence it may be described as the unification of personality.

The tracing of the process of this 'higher reason' forms Dr. Inge's religious philosophy. 'The philosophy of the soul's journey to God as traversed in the normal religious experience.'<sup>2</sup> Such, at least, Dr. Inge takes to be the issue of the system of Plotinus, and upon Neoplatonism (though he prefers to speak of Christian Platonism) he bases his own account on the ground that mystical philosophy naturally follows lines similar to those of Plotinus, because based upon the same experience.

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, p. 3; cf. pp. 5, 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.

Dr. Inge follows the Platonist and Neoplatonist distinction between the soul-world and the intelligible world. The soul-world is the world of ordinary consciousness generally, of will and time, where evil appears as real. The intelligible world is the world of God's mind, where the discords of experience cease from troubling, where evil is suppressed. Here God is immanent and transcendent. It is not opposed to the soul-world. It contains all that belongs there, but is in brief a positive edition of what in the soul-world appears as negative. To this world the soul's march is directed, and even now it is 'partly open' to us.

There is still a higher stage. In harmony with the 'One beyond Intelligence' of Plotinus, Dr. Inge hints darkly of a final consummation. 'Even as religion starts in an undifferentiated feeling of the Beyond, a feeling in which all possible developments of the moral, intellectual, and emotional life are implicit, so its supreme and ideal consummation, after the wheel has gone full circle, must be a final identification of thinker and thought, in which the Mind, which has come to its full rights by including all experience within itself, passes again on an infinitely higher plane into the region of undifferentiated feeling.'<sup>1</sup>

I am obliged to quote the passage in full, since its extreme vagueness defies paraphrase. This consummation is further described as 'a passing of knowledge into love,' but it 'belongs not to our present state.' It is said to be logically necessary—  
■ statement which may be doubted, though no

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, p. 12.



doubt will be attached to the subsequent remark that 'it has but little relation to any facts of experience.'

There are three paths by which this scale of perfection is ascended—truth, beauty, and goodness. It is, Dr. Inge thinks, an error to rely solely upon the last of these, even though, as the mystics generally admit, an ethical preparation is necessary for the ascent.

In order to graft upon these general principles a Christian character, Dr. Inge resorts to an interpretation of the Logos Christology of St. Paul and St. John, which regards Christ as the cosmic principle of which the universe forms an external expression. This is the cosmological aspect of the matter. The personal bearing of the doctrine is that Christ is the true expression of life, and our personalities are only truly realized by union with Him. It is plain that the former aspect is at least sympathetic towards the theory of panpsychism. The whole amounts to a theory of divine immanence, which it is suggested is not pantheistic, since it is asserted that thereby personality is not lost but found, but rather panentheistic: 'God is in all, and all is in God.' By panentheism I understand a pantheism which overlaps.

Such a view obviously demands a particular conception of personality. 'The personality . . . is both the end—the ideal self—and the changing *Moi*, and yet neither. If either thesis is held divorced from its antithesis the thought ceases to be mystical. The two ideals of self-assertion and self-sacrifice are both true and right, and both separately unattain-

able. They are opposites which are really necessary to each other.’<sup>1</sup> Dr. Inge deems the modern conception of personality too rigid. For him personality is an ideal, not a given fact; an ideal only to be attained by the surrender of the self in its individual sense. Personality is the single manifestation of two abstractions, either of which would collapse without the other—individuality and universality. True personality is attained not by the assertion but by the suppression of will, by ‘constructing our universe on a Christo-centric or cosmo-centric basis, not a self-centred one.’<sup>2</sup> By this means man becomes the instrument of God, and fulfils his proper sphere and purpose within the unity or organism of the whole. Personality, therefore, stretches out into the infinite, unattained, at least till time is no more for us, but holding within itself the promise of real union with God—a climax which we are ‘entitled to claim as already ours, in a transcendental sense, in virtue of the eternal purpose of God made known to us in Christ.’<sup>3</sup>

This, in brief, is the mystical pathway to God. It starts with our natural powers, and leads upward through the sensible world to the intelligible world of God’s thoughts, and beyond that to the climax. At this apex the mystical character of the process becomes more pronounced, and hence the vagueness of the terms in which this consummation is described. Two points, however, distinguish Dr. Inge’s Mysticism from that of the pre-Christian mystics. The

<sup>1</sup> *Christian Mysticism*, p. 367.

<sup>2</sup> *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> *Christian Mysticism*, p. 368.

world-principle is identified with the Second Person of the Trinity, and some attempt is made to safeguard personality by giving to it an expansive character, whereby its absorption is regarded as actually its realization.

§ 4. *Further Statement and Examination of Dr. Inge's Position*

Such is Dr. Inge's account of the general process of mystical experience. I shall make no attempt to question whether Dr. Inge's view is representative of that of the mystics generally ; if it is inadequate it is for them to correct it. The point now at issue is, its character as a religious philosophy.

Dr. Inge, though a scholarly, is not always a methodical writer, and it is sometimes difficult to determine whether he is describing or endorsing the views he sets forth, particularly as a considerable amount of historical matter is intermingled with his exposition. Dr. Inge speaks of Christian Platonism, but the correctness of this ascription depends upon an estimate of the relation of Plotinus to Plato with which it is hardly possible to be content. Dr. Inge treats Plotinus as if he were the heir and product of all the ages of Greek thought, the legitimate successor of Plato, welding into one the many issues that arose from the greater thinker's speculation. An alternative estimate sees in Plotinus a last attempt to vivify abstract and barren modes of thought, the degeneration not the generation of Greek philosophy, by a frantic resort to a Mysticism which may have been, as Dr. Inge and

most of Plotinus's expositors assert, Greek in character, but which has by no means been proved not to be, what a first glance certainly suggests, Oriental. The result was a system which Dr. Inge ennobles as 'one of the greatest achievements of the human mind,' but may appear to other eyes as a self-contradictory hybrid, whose true significance is revealed by its after-history, a rapid degeneration into theurgy, magic, and superstition of a generally gross character. It is hardly possible to believe that the seeds that bore so ill a crop were not latent in the philosophy of Plotinus, and no deep scrutiny is needful, indeed, to trace them. Whilst admitting the merits of Plotinus in an age singularly destitute of intellectual achievements, it must be held that Dr. Inge does not draw that philosopher to scale. He selects too discriminatingly the good to live after him, and inters the evil with his bones, so that the Neoplatonic Mysticism appears to be the culmination of Platonic philosophy, not what it seems to others, the beginning of its end, its final disintegration. The fruit is known by the tree as well as the tree by the fruit, and one is bound to receive cautiously the fruit of the decaying tree of Neoplatonism.

A comparison of Dr. Inge's philosophy with that of the Neo-Hegelians throws some light on both systems. Both conceive religion to be concerned with the effort to rise from a lower to a higher self, and both regard that universal and highest self as in the Absolute, whilst wishing alike to make compatible a real Absolute and a real individual. The similarity between Principal Caird's 'Universal Life of Reason,' and Dr. Inge's 'higher reason' is

noticeable. Both hold that the knowledge of God is revealed to the united consciousness, but both consider that will and feeling are to be trusted only when duly policed by the intellect. But though Dr. Inge's nomenclature gives his philosophy a 'rational' aspect, as against the high claims of Hegel he adopts a more cautious attitude towards the powers of reason.<sup>1</sup> 'Our religious faith is deeper and fuller than the expressions which it finds for itself. Being in its essence divine, faith can never fully embody itself in any human forms. It is not exactly above *Reason*, for the reason of man, as a Greek theologian said, is the throne of the Godhead, but it is above *Rationalism*—the logic of the understanding.'<sup>2</sup> Here Dr. Inge departs from Hegel, and, resorting to Mysticism, confesses thereby the final bankruptcy of the intellect in divine things, despite his own attacks on 'anti-intellectualism,' and his attempts to keep the intellect in solvency as long as possible. The question therefore arises, whether the device of Mysticism is able to effect what the Neo-Hegelians fail to effect, the relation of the idol of the study, the Absolute, to the concrete life of the market-place.

Plotinus exalted 'the One,' the Absolute of his system, beyond intelligence, and was driven to mystical experiences, which he is said to have attained on four occasions, in order to reach unto it. Plotinus has considerable trouble in describing the

<sup>1</sup> A good statement of his relation to Hegelianism and other forms of intellectualism is afforded by Dr. Inge in *Faith and Its Psychology*, Lect. xi.

<sup>2</sup> *Faith and Knowledge*, p. 181.

vision in any terms at all, and can only do so metaphorically. Being beyond cognition it is also beyond inference, and can only be described as being attained by stripping off all plurality, even such as is implied by being distinct from the vision itself. It is generally said that the mysticism of Plotinus is not a part of his philosophy. It certainly has an extra-philosophical character, but apart from it the One—the apex of all—is an unknown and unknowable phantom. Such a *reductio ad absurdum* being impossible, Plotinus is driven to Mysticism to reach that which he supposes to be beyond philosophy, and thus to attempt the formal completeness of his system.

Dr. Inge fares no better than Plotinus. He is convinced that the last word of his system, 'logically necessary,' is the All in All Absolute. Like Plotinus he finds it difficult to bring this intangible sole reality into any connexion with common reality, and is driven accordingly to adopt two strange devices.

The first is to distinguish between the Godhead and God. Dr. Inge sees clearly that the Absolute proper is not God, but, convinced that it ought to be, he attempts a reconciliation in the following manner. 'Our knowledge must be of God, not of the Godhead, and the God of religion is not the Absolute, but the highest form under which the Absolute can manifest Himself to finite creatures in various states of imperfection.'<sup>1</sup> The second is like unto it. Though sharply criticizing the pragmatists for representing God as a 'limited,

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, pp. 13, 14.



struggling spirit,' Dr. Inge approves an extraordinary remark of the late Father Tyrrell to the effect that 'the fiction of God's finitude and relativity is a necessity to man's religious life, but that the interests both of intellectual truth and of religion require us to recognize this fiction as such under pain of mental incoherence on the one side and of superstition and idolatry on the other,' adding himself, 'The notion of a finite God is one that the moralist can never afford to forget nor the metaphysician to remember.'<sup>1</sup>

Such candid confessions are more creditable to Dr. Inge's intellectual honesty than to his intellectual consistency. They are, however, the direct result of two unwarrantable assumptions: in the first place, that the Absolute is the sole reality, in the second, that the Absolute in a modified form, fitted for human apprehension, is the God of religion.

Dr. Inge, like most Absolutist philosophers, assumes the reality of the Absolute. Despite the time-honoured character of this course, it must be protested that it is not less than a begging of the question. The Absolute is a hypothesis. All philosophy must assume some primary reality; the question at issue between philosophers is the nature of reality. This the Absolutists would settle beforehand by taking the case out of court and presenting it as an impugnable assumption that reality is the timeless Absolute. Choose between the Absolute and self-stultification, they demand. All the Absolute does is to appear, and, since its appearances are always shown to be contradictory, the conclusion is

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, pp. 29, 30.



that the Absolute is real. This may be resented as a caricature, but it is by no means a wholly inappropriate description. As a matter of fact, the perfect character of the Absolute can only be maintained by resorting to the somewhat indefinite expedient of describing the Absolute by maintaining that it is what everything else is not. It is easy to find verbal contradiction in any and all experience that can be characterized positively; but, like Spencer's Unknowable, the Absolute is, though theoretically the source of all reality, practically uncharacterizable, and, so long as this is so, it is possible to maintain for it some show of perfection. When characterization begins difficulties commence, and hence, perhaps, the very remote and secluded place the Absolute is allowed to retain in philosophy. As a matter of fact, one of the prime difficulties of the Absolutist hypothesis is met with when it is asked how the original perfection of the Absolute comes to be differentiated into individual finite experiences, to say nothing of the problem of error, or the problem of evil concerning which both Dr. Inge and Principal Caird admit a final insolubility. Dr. McTaggart,<sup>1</sup> who is always most honest in recording consequences unfavourable to his own point of view, has confessed that our failure to perceive the perfection of the universe in some measure destroys that perfection, since in so far as we do not see it we are not perfect, and in so far as we are not perfect the universe of which we are parts is not.

For Dr. Inge, however, the Absolute is not hypothesis but fact, and accordingly he must

<sup>1</sup> *Hegelian Dialectic*, § 150 seq.

encounter the inevitable problems of Absolutism, the perfect whole composed of imperfect parts, the difficulty of retracing his steps, and, from the conception of an Absolute claimed as the logical outcome of induction, to show the possibility of deduction, with its consequent peril of sacrificing the abstract consistency of the Absolute. The outcome of the attempt is the twofold device already mentioned, which arises out of the effort to attach the Absolute somehow to the 'sensible world' of experience, or even to the 'intelligible world' that lies beyond.

The second assumption is the deification of the Absolute. The impossibility of simply identifying the Absolute with the God of religion has already been contended.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Inge would obviate the difficulty by distinguishing the Godhead or Absolute, and God, or the highest form of the Absolute's manifestation to the finite. The distinction would seem only superior to the Gnostic separation of the Deity and the demiurge in this, that the two are harmonious not hostile, and it introduces very serious difficulties. If our knowledge is of God, not of the Absolute, how is God related to the Absolute, and how are we related through God to it?

Dr. Inge speaks of God as a mode or manifestation of the Absolute. Though the conception is often honoured in philosophical usage, it is one which belongs rather to the world of sense than the world beyond sense-objects, to intelligence rather than to the 'One beyond intelligence.' What, however, is the relation between the Absolute and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 156 seq.

its manifestation? Everything in the universe, the good as well as the bad, the foolish as well as the wise, is ultimately a 'manifestation' of the Absolute. God, however, Dr. Inge declares, is the 'highest form' of the Absolute. But what ground is there for such distinction? Simply as the principle of unity the Absolute can have no qualities. As the concrete fullness of all it has all qualities, good and bad alike. The love and mercy and justice of God do not belong to the Godhead as the unifying principle. They can only be attributed to the Godhead because they belong to the world of objects which the Godhead in its fullness embraces. What justification therefore is there for positing these moral and righteous qualities of God as the expression of the essential character of the Godhead, rather than any others, perhaps entirely opposite, which might be gathered from the same world, and for which the Absolute is just as much responsible?

That the distinction is really only a methodological device is apparent from the fact that, though Dr. Inge draws it, he does not employ it, but uses the term God as equivalent to the Absolute, and unhesitatingly identifies that august entity—or non-entity—with the God of Christianity. If Dr. Inge runs away from the consequences of his distinction there is the more, not the less, reason for facing them. Upon this definition God is an appearance, and consequently an imperfect appearance, of the Absolute. This is a strange alternative to be preferred to the 'finite God' of Personal Idealism for which Dr. Inge has so keen a scorn. Moreover, to

say that God is the highest form under which the Absolute can manifest itself, if it mean anything at all, can only mean the highest form under which we can apprehend the Absolute. Accordingly, our knowledge of God is not knowledge of the Absolute, but only of a self-contradictory appearance of the Absolute ; it is not imperfect because it is incomplete merely, it is radically imperfect even so far as it goes.

Moreover, the mystical relation between God and man, as Dr. Inge traces it, is represented as a progression, that is to say as in time. It is a relation between man and the Godhead limited, not between man and the Godhead proper. How, then, is it to be translated out of time and transferred from God to the Godhead ? Dr. Inge shows no way whatever. It might have been expected that here he would, like Plotinus, have sought a mystical path 'swooning into the Absolute.' Though this would have been neither a logical nor a philosophical connexion it might be subjectively satisfactory, at any rate to whomsoever experiences it. Dr. Inge, however, seems averse from going beyond reason, remarking, 'It is more than doubtful whether the ecstasy which the mystics valued as an anticipation of the beatific vision is anything more than a proof . . . that to strive to pass beyond reason is to fall outside it.'<sup>1</sup> This is not encouraging to the mystical passage from God to the Godhead, yet in the rather vague words already quoted<sup>2</sup> an experience is mentioned which can only mean, if I have understood it at all, union with the Absolute. There is, therefore, a

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, p. 178.

breakdown somewhere. Dr. Inge cannot distinguish between God and the Godhead and subsequently treat the terms interchangeably without some justification, some explanation how God the part becomes the Godhead the whole. His system is professedly conducted within the bounds of knowledge, and stops short of the Absolute as God. Upon this a superstructure is raised, connected with the foundations only by an illegitimate leap from God to the Absolute, the sole result of which is to add inconsistencies to the whole system.

The second expedient is even stranger, and witnesses not only to the unbridged cleft between the Absolute and God, but also to the paralysing effect of the conception of an Absolute on moral action. It is seriously suggested that, for ethical considerations, we should solemnly hoodwink ourselves, and effect moral and religious progress by pretending that God is finite, events in time real, the struggle between good and evil earnest, but, in order to avoid the intellectual difficulties gratuitously invoked by the adoption of Absolutism, should at the same time remember that all is a pretence. It is difficult to find words to characterize this astounding proposal. This is Dr. Inge's alternative to the 'finite God' of the Personal Idealists! They, he declares, separate facts and values; he cleaves with one stroke moral and religious from intellectual truth, and suggests that a falsehood should be accepted in order to maintain a truth. If any more utter condemnation of Absolutism is to be found it is not easy to say where. Like certain insects which die in parturition, the Absolute issues

from reason to slay it. Such a course inevitably must destroy not only the ethical progress it is intended to encourage, but the intellectual consistency it is intended to safeguard. Dr. Inge has set a gulf between God and the Absolute which, failing to bridge by reason, revelation, or rapture, he proposes to cross by deliberate self-deception.

Dr. Inge's view of personality needs careful attention. He rejects summarily the modern view, which he traces back to Kant, regarding it as yielding a rigid, impenetrable self-existence, and substitutes the conception which he refers to as that of early Christian theology, 'the absolutely fluid conception of personality' found in the New Testament, adding as an example the fact that Christ was thought to be John the Baptist. One might be tempted to hazard the opinion that Kant will be found a safer authority on the subject than Herod, but the question must be taken seriously, and it concerns Dr. Inge's theory rather than that potentate's conjectures.

'The union of individuality and universality in a single manifestation forms the cardinal point in personality,' says Dr. Inge.<sup>1</sup> Personality cannot have an independent existence, though it may possess an independent value. As an expression of the universal aspect of personality Dr. Inge quotes 'the hypothesis of a racial self, with a higher degree of personal life than that of individual men and women.' This 'might easily be brought into connexion with the Logos-theology.'<sup>2</sup> He illustrates

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 113.



by reference to Emerson's *Over-soul*, but prefers to denote it as 'spirit,' or even 'the Church,' if the latter term be interpreted widely, for spiritual life is most fully realized in corporate life, and Dr. Inge will accept no definition of personality that prevents one person sharing his being with another. Personality accordingly is to be regarded as an ideal, not a given fact. The more complete the participation in this wider life the more complete the personality. It is a *progressus ad infinitum*, and 'at the apex of our being we have the inkling of a fully personal life.'<sup>1</sup> Yet 'personality is not only the strictest unity of which we have any experience, it is the fact which creates the postulate of unity, upon which all philosophy is based.'<sup>2</sup>

What do these statements convey? It may be granted that to conceive of personality solely as a rigid, impervious atom is impossible; but does Dr. Inge really think that Professor Pringle Pattison, to whom he attributes this doctrine in its crudest form, is guilty of so obvious a blunder? Surely what this writer means is that personality is not merely a nexus of relations but a unique and independent centre of relation. Personality, clearly, must be in relation to that which is 'outside' it, but it cannot be in relation unless first it is in itself a fact. Dr. Inge speaks of personality as an ideal, not a given fact; and yet, as the fact upon which the postulate of unity is based, he refers to it as the ideal and the empirical self and yet neither. Paradoxes may be a special property of Mysticism, but if they are ex-

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> *Christian Mysticism*, p. 30.



hibited as unified in philosophical theory it must be demanded how it is accomplished. If it is asked what is the relation between the ideal and the empirical self, Dr. Inge will neither say 'the same' nor 'different.' What he says is virtually 'same-different.' At the same time he regards the 'transfigured self' as so different from the 'original self,' as to enable him to acquiesce in the Platonic distinction between the higher and lower selves. That distinction Dr. Inge imports, forgetting that he has cut away its ground. In Plotinus it is the outcome of a certain unresolved dualism which treated 'matter,' in practice if not in theory, as antithetical to divine 'form.' Dr. Inge, as an Absolutist who has God for his Absolute, will be hard put to if he is to explain the existence of the lower self at all.

The truth seems to be that Dr. Inge wants personality without individual independence, and is hard pressed to obtain it. He would retain the value modern thought allows to personality, together with a mystical process which historically—and this may lead one to suspect, logically—has been subversive of it. The value of personality is inseparably attached to the conception which first gave birth to it, the independence of personality, and Dr. Inge rejects this, whilst trying to keep its consequences.

*Our* self is primarily the empirical self. The empirical self is inconvenient to Dr. Inge's theory; he values the ideal self only. Yet he realizes that the ideal self must somehow be attached to the empirical self if it is to be 'ours' at all, and consequently hovers between declaring that personality is a fact

and not a fact, a unity and yet a tissue of relations, losing the unity in the relations and yet not losing it. He would have personality realized by a development, and only personality when it is developed, but lacks a fixed point from which the development shall proceed. He would have a maximum without a minimum. He would have personality possessed with independent value, but no independence. If Dr. Inge would regard personality as a given fact, he might show it to be an ideal. He regards it as an ideal; but, though knowing that *merely* as an ideal it is not real, he is unable to exhibit it as a fact, simply because he will not allow it to be based on a fact before its development, and, as that development is an infinite progression, he is debarred from calling it a fact afterwards.

This initial difficulty is passed, but never got over. Further contradiction is involved in the conception of an abstract racial self. Such a unity can only be spoken of as possessing 'a higher degree of personal life' than individuals by a violent misuse of the term 'personal.' Surely Dr. Inge does not hold that the Church which he is willing to regard as serving for an over-soul is intelligibly to be called personal! Personality implies unity, but unity does not imply personality necessarily, and the unity of personalities is not personal, nor is there any reason why it should be.

Finally, if personality is realized most perfectly only at the 'apex of our being,' it is clear that Dr. Inge is not taking personality in its usual sense, but in a sense of his own manufacture. It would follow that a self-centred man is only very imperfectly a

personality at all. Laudable though this may be as a homiletic maxim, is it not perilous to assert that, as we know it, evil personality is less intense, is less personality, than good? The facts more often point to the directly opposite conclusion. The contradiction would cease to trouble if Dr. Inge were willing to accept the independence of personality as primary, but stress upon its 'ideal' aspect leaves him unable to explain the power of anti-ideal personality.

Some of these embarrassments might possibly have been relieved by attempting to distinguish individuality from personality. Upon his principles, however, Dr. Inge can hardly be expected to essay this. The type of thought which he represents works easily in an ideal universe where sin and self-assertion are unknown. It ill becomes the mixed universe of actual experience. Dr. Inge speaks of sin as rooted in self-will or selfishness. Accordingly he must regard it as the negation of real existence. As such it ought not to persist, but to annihilate itself; indeed it should never appear at all, for there are no independent beings to create it, and those leased points of the Absolute's existence which manifest it are thereby cutting themselves off from the life of the whole, which is their true life. For such evil as exists there can only be one being responsible, the perfect Absolute, which thus displays a most unexpected suicidal tendency. To try, however, as Dr. Inge does, to excuse the Absolute's lapse by referring to sin as an 'incidental appearance' to the actualization of moral purpose is no less an outrage of religious conviction than a contradiction of

the Absolute's supposed character and powers. Merely to chart a fairway for the theory without removing the rocks from the course is to invite an inevitable disaster.

The facts of evil and of evil personality are not the only facts that ill befit Dr. Inge's theory. It is not easy to connect it with the historical facts of the religion with which it is supposed to company—for example the Atonement and the Incarnation. If sin is 'an appearance incidental to the actualization of moral purpose as vital activity,'<sup>1</sup> it is difficult to say why Christ the Logos, incarnate primarily as a world-principle, not as a Saviour, must die as a way of salvation from this incidental appearance. Dr. Inge champions 'orthodoxy,' and doubts whether any theologian can be 'orthodox' unless a Platonist, but it is useless to evade the fact that the 'orthodox' doctrine of the Atonement belongs to the anthropocentric view that Dr. Inge scorns. Nor is it easy to see what connexion there is between the Logos as a world-principle and the historical Incarnation. The Incarnation likewise demands an anthropocentric view-point. It is one thing to hold that Christ represents the cosmic principle, the common life of man, and another to show that this cosmic principle must become incarnate in time amongst men. The Atonement and the Incarnation of Christ are very much like superfluities in mystical philosophy.

All this goes to justify the Ritschlian contention that Mysticism is at war with historical Christianity. The present concern is not with Christianity as such,

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, p. 184.

but with the consequent deduction that Mysticism as a religious philosophy is incongruous with the historical facts of religion generally. Dr. Inge maintains that his mysticism is Christian. But if any one follow his general plan, and reject the identification of Christ with the Logos, no fundamental distinction would be made, nor yet if the Christian conception of a personal God were rejected in favour of an impersonal Pan. The Christian character of such mysticism is accordingly to be judged to be an accretion, not really germane to the system. Whilst the identification of the cosmic principle and Christ may be natural to an already convinced Christian, general mystical principles in no way necessitate it. The connexion between the adjective and the noun in the expression Christian Mysticism is slight indeed. Mystical philosophy is quite independent of historical religion, and is an allegorization rather than an explanation thereof. With a little ingenuity it might be grafted on to almost any religious system. Properly it belongs to none.

As a philosophy all Mysticism suffers from its subjective character. Upon the actuality of mystical experience depends the process from the 'sensible' to the 'intelligible' world, for 'the world as it is for God' can only be known by a mystical union. It is true that all religious experience has its mystical aspect, but in basing a religious philosophy upon such experience all that is postulated is the existence of such experience generally as a common fact. Its deliverances are then interpreted in a manner accessible to all, and open to logical

investigation. Mystical philosophy continues in subjectivity, and points to an ascent that cannot be examined by logic, closed to all who do not share it. Its difficulties are therefore much more numerous. The guarantee of the mystical upward path, after all, is certain individual experiences, which are both rare and, because of their marked subjectivity, difficult even to compare one with another, and so lack even the quasi-universality of enumerative induction. It is strange that Dr. Inge thinks in universals when his data are particulars, and treats the mystic's progress as if it were as patent to all as a process of inductive reasoning. A particular experience may be true, but is not necessarily a logical ladder.

In selecting Dr. Inge as typical of mystical philosophy due regard has been given to the fact that he follows the usual Neoplatonic model. That this is the only basis possible need not be assumed.<sup>1</sup> Though certain tendencies of Mysticism lean towards the Absolutist type of thought, it is not intrinsically committed to it. I can see no reason why it should not start from an empirical basis. This would defeat much of the criticism of the preceding pages, but still would not remedy the radical defects involved in applying a subjective process to develop an objective philosophy. The avenues that lead from philosophy to Mysticism are many, but few there be that find the way back. Once within the mystical circle, philosophy lacks the means to bring back the objects of its search, even if it has found

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Arnold Whately's *Inner Light*, for example, affords a different type of a mystical philosophy, ably presented.



them, to its own sphere. The attempt to do so, however, seems perennial, and consequently it has been impossible to omit the consideration of Mysticism as a religious philosophy ; but the conclusion tends to enforce the recognition of the fact that Mysticism serves better as a religious experience than as a religious philosophy.

## NOTE

### DR. INGE AND PERSONALISM

A considerable part of Dr. Inge's *Personal Idealism and Mysticism* is devoted to criticism of the personal and voluntarist standpoint, and the attack is renewed in *Faith and its Psychology*. As the attitude of this survey is sympathetic towards the views Dr. Inge condemns, some notice of his strictures seems to be demanded. Unfortunately Dr. Inge is very indiscriminating in his attack. Pragmatists, 'Will-philosophers,' Personal Idealists, Ritschlians, Modernists, writers as diverse as James, Pringle Pattison, Herrmann, Tyrrell, Loisy, are all alike presumptuous psychologists who stretch forth a profane hand of Uzzah to the help of the sacred ark of theology. It is scarcely possible to answer, or even to understand, Dr. Inge until he is more definite regarding the nature of the *Wünsch-philosophie* he abhors.

Nor can it be said that Dr. Inge has very clearly conceived the teaching of voluntarist philosophers. He repeats, for example, the old and altogether unfounded charge that Pragmatism separates facts and values, adding, 'So far as I can see, every judgement that we make is at once a judgement of fact and a judgement of value.'<sup>1</sup> For some reason Dr. Schiller's work is not

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, p. 133.



noticed by this critic, but, had he consulted the opinion of the best-known British pragmatist before repeating this charge, he would have learned that 'fact without value is rather a figment of abstraction than a psychical experience,'<sup>1</sup> and 'all values are facts and all facts are values.'<sup>2</sup> Or again, when Dr. Inge asserts<sup>3</sup> that Pragmatism arrogantly assumes that we humans are the only immortal spirits in the universe, a reference to Professor James's Pragmatism<sup>4</sup> discloses an expression of exactly the opposite view. Such instances are not isolated, and Dr. Inge's strictures must therefore be regarded as proceeding manifestly from an imperfect comprehension of the implications of the type of thought he desires to demolish, and the 'anti-intellectualism,' which, not without heat, he tears to tatters is at least partially, if not largely, the creation of his own imagination. Considerable though the value of Dr. Inge's book as an essay in mystical philosophy may be, it is not augmented by the critical portions.

<sup>1</sup> *Humanism*, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 163.

<sup>3</sup> *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, p. 139.

<sup>4</sup> *Pragmatism*, p. 299.

## CHAPTER VI

### AN ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION : JAMES MARTINEAU

#### § 1. *Dr. Martineau's Standpoint*

MARTINEAU<sup>1</sup> himself chose to denote his religious philosophy as built upon a twofold argument—from causality and conscience; and his *Study of Religion* is planned accordingly. This classification, however, has not met with immediate acceptance from either the expositors or the critics of Martineau. Dr. Caldecott,<sup>2</sup> for example, who reveals much insight in his designations and analyses of the various shades of Theism, holds that Martineau's account is misleading, since his treatment of that to which he is accustomed to refer as 'the supreme sentiment of reverence' reveals an intuitivist (i.e. mystical) basis, in addition to what Dr. Caldecott calls his 'combined speculative and ethical Theism.' If, however, one word be chosen as most characteristically distinctive of Martineau's religious philosophy, I should have no hesitation in adopting his own designation, 'ethical.' Though Martineau speaks of a twofold basis, and gives much fuller consideration to the argument from causality than to that

<sup>1</sup> Born 1805. Died 1900.

<sup>2</sup> *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 343 seq.

from conscience in his *Study of Religion*, it must not be forgotten that this volume assumes the results of its predecessor, the *Types of Ethical Theory*, the whole reasoning of which goes to support the argument from conscience. Moreover, Martineau's view of causality is radically attached to his ethical doctrine in this, that he conceives of the first Cause as Will, and more than that, as Will that is free. The only other causes he will acknowledge are created wills which also are free. Apart from such freedom, Martineau can find no proper place for ethics. His whole philosophy turns upon the ethical question of freedom, and its fundamental aspect is ethical. For Martineau ethics and Libertarianism were virtually synonyms.

The biography of Martineau's thought goes far in explaining this. Trained amongst strict determinists, he abandoned his early teachers, convinced of the untenability of their doctrine. Such conversions are almost always dominant in the history of any man's thought. It is not for nothing that the first ties are severed. Having parted from Hartley and Priestley on this question, it became hereafter for him the crucial point in ethics and religion. Whether dealing with it directly or indirectly, it is always evident that the question is supreme. It was no mere matter of arrangement that made Martineau, in his old age, issue first his *Types of Ethical Theory* and then his *Study of Religion*.

The third volume, entitled *The Seat of Authority in Religion*, is somewhat disappointing to the high expectations which the former volumes arouse. Much is a recapitulation of the position justified in

the previous works, which, if somewhat differently stated, adds nothing essential. The remainder is largely an attempt to justify the Unitarian conception of the significance of the Christian religion. To do so, Martineau is tempted away from his proper sphere into lengthy disquisitions upon New Testament criticism, in which his erudition serves him but feebly and he is plainly ill at ease. The result is little more than a wholesale reproduction of the views of a school of criticism, chiefly German, which, whilst possibly defensible to some extent a quarter of a century ago, is now outdated and badly damaged. With it evaporates modern interest in a large part of the volume, which, but for this unfortunate association with an ephemeral criticism, might have rivalled the permanent attractiveness of the other members of the trilogy.

In these three volumes, particularly in the second, the essentials of Martineau's religious philosophy are set forth. The more directly philosophical of his *Essays* and the skilful analysis of his *Study of Spinoza* are also often valuable and illuminating, whilst his earlier papers and essays are instructive in the comprehension of the natural history of his thought. His other works, homiletic and devotional, such as the *Endeavours after the Christian Life*, share in the rare literary beauty of all his writings, but lie off the direct route of the present purpose, the first step to the fulfilment of which will be the consideration of the ethical ground-work upon which Martineau erected his religious superstructure.

§ 2. *The Ethical Basis of Martineau's Religious Philosophy*

In treating of ethics before religion Martineau is guided by belief in the methodological rather than the essential priority of the former. Their relation he regards as one of interdependence; but since the experience of a given ethical fact, the sense of obligation, leads, in his view, upon investigation to religion, it is natural to pave the way to a consideration of religion by the treatment of ethics. Accordingly, in his *Types of Ethical Theory* Martineau elaborates his ethical conclusions, under the somewhat cumbersome title 'Idiopsychological Ethics,' mingling it with a review of opposing theories.

Starting from the fact that men irresistibly pass judgements of approval and disapproval, Martineau advances two contentions. Firstly, that such judgements are passed upon the inner motive rather than the outward act; and secondly, that we first pass judgement upon our own motives, and only subsequently upon those of others. According to Martineau's analysis, the moral character of any such judgement is constituted by a certain fact—that the mind which chooses must have before it at least two 'springs of action' (i.e. motives, solicitations, impulses, or tendencies) as alternatives *simultaneously* present and possible *for us*. The distinctive peculiarity of Martineau's ethics reveals itself here, in his assumption that in all cases, immediately upon the appearance of this pair of alternatives their relative moral position will be intuitively realized, the one higher, the other lower. Moreover,

this intuition carries inevitably with it the sense that we *ought* to follow the higher, and unsophisticated nature has no doubt that it *can*. Upon these convictions, unanalysable but authoritative, of 'ought' and 'can' Martineau's whole ethical philosophy hinges; and through this gate is the path to religion, for although we may obey without question the authority herein revealed, sooner or later the spirit of investigation must ask what and whence it is. Then it becomes evident that it is laid upon us by some one or something without us; for, were it merely subjective we should be free alike to impose it and to absolve ourselves from performance of a law we had laid upon ourselves; whereas the sense of obligation manifestly carries with it the sense that we cannot so excuse ourselves.

The inquiry into the nature of this external authority can have, so Martineau holds, but two issues. It will either yield a hedonistic interpretation, and be regarded as merely the embodiment of what is good for us, or for society generally, of the whole over the part; or else it will, as with him, lead up to religion, wherein ethics gains its perfecting, and to the God revealed in religion, in whom the ethical imperative finds its foundation.

So exclusive is Martineau's interest in this avenue to religion that, whilst not forbidding others, he sees in them no beauty that he should desire them. His mind followed throughout his life the types of thought familiar to his earlier studies, and he never seems fully to have accustomed himself to the standpoint of the time of his later life. Despite his vigorous handling of teleology, he is more at home with

Hartley than with Darwin, with Mill than with Spencer. To any other method of approaching the problems of religion he gives scant recognition, dismissing with a semi-ironical reference 'the so-called science of religions,' and though his first argument deals with causality, the primary and chief way lies through the moral consciousness.

It has already been stated that Martineau's ethics stand or fall with the question of freedom. Indeed he does not scruple to say that 'the language of ethics, when translated into necessarian formulas, parts with all conceptions distinctly moral.'<sup>1</sup> In the *Types of Ethical Theory* the freedom of the will is assumed, but each of his two other principal works defends it, chiefly the *Study of Religion*, where a long chapter is devoted to the subject. In the *Study of Spinoza*, as in all Martineau's criticisms of other ethical theories, it is made the test question of ethical adequacy. There are two ways in which the problem may be approached. It is usual for writers advocating libertarian views to allow the realm of rigid necessity a wellnigh universal sway, and then to attempt to beg back a small portion of freedom from it for human consciousness. Martineau chooses the other and better way. It is a general postulate in all his work that we must trust the veracity of our faculties; and assuming free will because our consciousness, untouched by the conceptions of necessity that a study of physical laws imparts, certainly does declare it, he prepares to rebut the objections imported from the physical sphere

<sup>1</sup> *Study of Religion*, vol. ii. p. 300. All references are to the second edition.



to weaken this primary intuition. Those with which Martineau deals are, firstly, the objections based on psychological grounds that all muscular movements are at first automatic, taking place at random. Accidentally some become associated with the idea of a pleasure, which then becomes desired as an end, so that our volitions become dependent upon the laws of suggestion. This Martineau combats on its own grounds, in an analysis too long to reproduce. Secondly, the older argument from the axiom of causality—that every cause can produce but one effect, which is met by Martineau's contrary conception of cause as will, which involves the power of deciding between alternatives. Next comes the argument of Buckle and others that the constancy and reliability of the law of averages show that actions are determined by unevadable laws; to which Martineau justly replies with a flat denial, stating that the law of averages can give no certainty as regards any one particular case, and if, by taking a large number, we obtain a constant average of similar results it is simply because the number of possibilities even to free-will is limited. Hence it is probable, but not certain, that out of a large number of courses open a fairly regular percentage will follow the same lines from time to time.

With regard to the more serious objection to free-will as incompatible with divine omniscience, Martineau takes the most candid and direct course, and anticipates the modern pragmatist by admitting that free-will is a limitation, albeit a self-limitation of God, and that He does not foreknow what He does not control.

‘Kant’s attempt to save moral freedom without trenching upon natural necessity’ Martineau appreciates rather in its intention than its result, refusing the separation between the phenomenal self of necessity and the noumenal self of freedom. He retorts that Kant gives a purely formal freedom. Human action takes place in time and phenomenally. The noumenal self separated from this sphere ‘remains a transcendental dream which never realizes itself.’ He further submits that Kant himself fails to keep the distinction clear, which commits him either to the necessity of abandoning it, or of allowing the free self the power of causality in the phenomenal world.

The positive side of Martineau’s argument for freedom is conducted by comparing the libertarian and determinist doctrines with regard to ‘their relative agreement with the fundamental conditions of the moral life’—a truly pragmatic standpoint. Differing accounts of the origin and authority of moral obligation may well be expected to produce different results. That the ethical quality of these results is the same Martineau strongly denies. Whilst it may be granted that Determinism is not incompatible with moral retribution, the determinist treats as illusory both the consciousness of the moral agent as to his freedom and the opinion of others regarding his action as free. Hence responsibility, obligation, merit, guilt, remorse, forgiveness—almost the whole vocabulary of ethics—are stultified. Necessarian ethics can describe only ‘phenomena in natural history,’ not what ought to be. Is it possible, he asks, that the ethical sentiments which

depend upon the assumption of freedom can be the same when freedom is denied? and will there not be, since these sentiments are of no small importance ethically, a corresponding difference in the practical treatment of ethical problems? It is only at such great price that we can mistrust our immediate consciousness of 'a sovereign power and our own responsibility.'

### § 3. *Martineau's Definition of Religion*

The statement previously made, that Martineau is more at home in the modes of thought prevalent in his earlier days than in later conceptions, receives further illustration in his definition of religion, which he restricts to 'the sense which it invariably bore half a century ago,' understanding thereby 'belief in an ever-living God, that is, a Divine Mind and Will ruling the universe and holding moral relations with mankind.'<sup>1</sup> This restriction gains by its conciseness, but obviously results in a definition of Theism rather than of religion. Between Theism and religion Martineau does not distinguish, treating the terms as synonymous. Although basing his ethics upon psychology, Martineau takes no interest in the relations of psychology and religion. Elsewhere, however, he draws nearer to modern phraseology in declaring that 'all religion resolves itself into a conscious relation, on our part, to a higher than we; and, on the part of the rational universe at large, to a higher than all'<sup>2</sup>—a statement which might, with little

<sup>1</sup> *Study of Religion*, vol. ii. p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 129.

emendation, serve as a general definition of a term which covers so wide a range of significances as does 'religion.' Under the circumstances, some right of restriction can hardly be refused, and Martineau's limitation, though technically misleading, need not, if it is borne in mind, be any cause of confusion.

Martineau joins the intuitionists in regarding this belief in an ever-living God, which constitutes religion, as an inward intuition; or, more strictly, as the interpretation of two or three intuitions. Such intuition he understands as revelation, and he limits revelation to intuition. This being so, it may be asked whether perception, which Martineau regards as giving the direct intuition of an external world, is not also revelation. Martineau anticipates the question, and does not reject the implication, remarking that intuitive conceptions of external reality belong to the sphere of necessary beliefs, those of conscience to preferential obligation. From this conception of revelation it follows that revelation is personal, born anew in each, and is not to be superseded by the transmission of religious beliefs from mind to mind. Physical phenomena, whether observed or reported, and consequently miracles, Martineau discards as the vehicles of revelation, on the ground that the immediate character of revelation as intuition limits it to what is or should be, not to happenings, whether past, present, or future.

'Natural religion is that in which man finds God; revealed religion is that in which God finds man,'<sup>1</sup> Martineau remarks. His conception of revelation

<sup>1</sup> *Seat of Authority*, p. 302.

leads him to 'invert the accepted order' and to treat natural religion as dependent upon revealed. Taken by itself, he urges, natural religion involves a *petitio principii*, secreting in the premisses more than they can contain, whilst to treat revealed religion as a re-edition of natural religion—Martineau evidently has Butler in mind—is merely to carry over the weakness of the latter to the former. If, on the other hand, the starting-point be explicit revelation, intuitively given, the implicit Theism of nature follows.

Martineau's view of religion, accordingly, may be regarded as consisting of an inward source personally revealed—it will be noticed that it is described as intuition, not as feeling—which, upon interpretation, issues in the belief Martineau has described in theistic terms. These intuitions are always treated individually, and no use is made of a possible appeal to their universality, in accordance with the strong individualism of Martineau's type of thought, and moreover their interpretation is regarded as yielding, in each case, an identical result.

#### § 4. *Martineau's Foundations of Religion*

Of the sufficiency of his twofold basis in cause and conscience Martineau is well assured, for in treating of the relation of God to nature and to man respectively we 'really exhaust all that we can seek or really desire to know of things divine.' The late R. A. Armstrong<sup>1</sup> relates that in conversa-

<sup>1</sup> *Analysis and Appreciation of Martineau's Study of Religion*, p. xiii.

tion with Martineau during the latter years of his life he suggested to him a third argument based on the sense of beauty, and that Martineau approved. The suggestion, however, does not seem to have been overlooked by Martineau,<sup>1</sup> though he mentions no reasons for its omission. It is possible that he regarded it as capable of inclusion as a corollary to his first argument<sup>2</sup> under the teleological section, much in the same way as when he hints that God as Judge, which might be regarded as a separate aspect, is really included under his second argument. Be that as it may, Martineau lends the whole strength of his reasoning to the twofold basis, and that only.

### *Cause as the Will of God*

Martineau's treatment of causality is directed to show that the only adequate conception of a cause that can be gained is one which involves the idea of a dynamic, and the only adequate conception of this dynamic is to be found in will. To the doctrine that the idea of causality arises from the observation of an invariable sequence of phenomena in times he retorts that such a view amounts merely to the expression of belief in the uniformity of nature, and gives no answer to the further question why this phenomenon rather than that, why the sequence is A—B—C, not A—M—N. To answer this, the mind must resort to the idea of *power*, and regard

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A letter to Prof. Knight quoted by Upton in *Dr. Martineau's Philosophy*, p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Caldecott, however, would expect it under the second argument, after dealing with God as perfection.



the antecedent phenomenon A which is followed by B and C as the vehicle to which this power lends itself. All change in phenomena must be due to power, and to power which is not in itself phenomenal, but permanent.

This conclusion naturally leads to further consideration of the character of this power, and the whole trend of modern scientific investigation goes to show that the distinction between forces is apparent, not real, that actually all force is one, that nothing is added to or subtracted from it. 'We have Science abolishing her own plurality of natural powers and, as her latest act, delivering the universe to the disposal of One alone: various in its phases but in its essence homogeneous. It is impossible not to press the inquiry, How are we to conceive of that essence?'<sup>1</sup> Martineau's answer is that we must draw from within rather than without. In our will, in our exercise of voluntary activity, we learn what it is to put forth power. In so doing we meet with resistance: indeed, it is obvious that otherwise we should not be conscious of our effort. Accordingly he argues that the most natural as well as the most serviceable explanation of cause is that which, on the analogy of our own will, regards it also as Will. Further, he regards it as an 'intuitive assumption that the non-ego is the counter-cause to the ego—Will *vis-à-vis* to Will.'<sup>2</sup> That is to say that, just as in our own will we have given to us the sense of causality, which leads us to regard all causation as the expression of will, so the external

<sup>1</sup> *Seat of Authority*, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Study of Religion*, vol. i. p. 227.



world that meets and resists our efforts we naturally understand as the expression of a Will other than our own, and the laws of nature as its permanent volitions.

Martineau admits of no 'second causes' in the operation of this Will other than created minds, remarking that the Primal Agent is not mechanical, needing tools for the fulfilment of his purposes. The contention is no doubt justified on the ground of parcimony; but, on the other hand, in treating of teleology, Martineau thinks the use of means no disparagement to the Deity—an admission which might be pressed against him by advocates of 'secondary causes.'

The argument is further advanced by contending that, though this Will is one, it must be regarded as possessed with the characteristic of will—the power to select between alternatives. Otherwise, for one thing at least, the heterogeneity of the universe is unaccounted for. On the determinist's own ground, if all that happens is necessitated by a prior happening, either a primitive and undetermined starting-point, or else an endless procession backwards, must be assumed. The former is the only practical course, and though such a stopping-point is doubtless arbitrary, in some form or other it seems almost inevitable; and Martineau is certainly reasonable in urging that the transition from the determinate to the indeterminate is most intelligible if it be understood as taking place in will, which at least *seems* to have the power of determining the contingent and selecting amongst alternatives.

The power to select from indeterminate possi-

bilities is, however, but one mark of will. To selection of this kind must be added the convergence of independent lines of action upon an end for which they were selected, and the subordination of minor to major ends. In other words Selection, Combination, and Gradation are the marks of will; and if they can be discovered in the universe it is proof that the Will which has been posited as cause is not unconscious will, and further that it is not Will merely transcendent, but also immanent in the world. To demonstrate the presence of these marks of intention, Martineau turns to natural science and biology to conduct a teleological inquiry. He endeavours to show that 'natural selection' fulfils the first requirement, if understood as purposive, arguing that the view that natural selection works automatically fails to fulfil the conditions. Cuvier's law of the 'correlation of organs' is quoted as an instance of combination, whilst gradation is revealed by the ascending order inorganic, organic, conscious, self-conscious.

To the eternal outcry of anthropomorphism Martineau very properly retorts that to conceive of the universe as Mind, Life, or Matter is anthropomorphic, since man shares in all three characteristics.

In this he is assuredly justified, for this rather foolish objection has been decidedly overdone. It is not enough for every critic to declaim the wisdom ascribed to Xenophanes, as if that settled for ever every view but his own. It is *Homo mensura aut nulla mensura*. All our thought is anthropomorphic, and it would be neither less pertinent nor less reproachful to hurl back 'electromorphic' to

the modern materialist, or 'zoomorphic' to the panpsychist.

Martineau's treatment of causality possesses the merits of clarity and thoroughness; but he regards it as needing to be supplemented by his second foundation in order that the causal agent may command the allegiance, not merely the acknowledgement, of man, and accordingly to this congenial subject he next addresses himself vigorously.

### *Conscience as the Voice of God*

From investigation of the fact of conscience Martineau obtains his second and parallel theistic base. Assuming the results of his *Types of Ethical Theory*, which he holds have established the existence of an authoritative moral imperative within man, he proceeds to the further inquiry as to its nature. He regards this question as capable only of two answers, either hedonistic or theistic, and his method of establishing the latter is to disestablish the former.

He deals accordingly with the various phases of the hedonistic explanation of the moral authority one by one. The bluntest putting of it—that it is merely thinly disguised self-interest—he thinks sufficiently disproved by the fact that disinterested affections are found both in animals and man. To argue that these are performed for pleasure is to confuse, not to say misuse, words. If it be urged that the moral authority is the consolidated expression of the judgements of society, Martineau replies that an authority of mere bulk has no true

power of command : a population of devils could exercise no sway over a single saint. Further, he denies that hedonistically it can be shown that the good of all is the good of each. If the authority be regarded as that of the higher self over the lower self, the permanent self over the temporary, it is to lose the universality of the authority, and make every man a law unto himself. Martineau is not unwilling to accept the scale of utility, provided that it be recognized that it is rational not moral, prudential and not categorical. All hedonistic explanations refer to the former, and lack the cogency of morality. What is right morally may often be advisable prudentially ; but, whilst the scales of prudent and right may be concomitant, they can never be identical. The attempt to differentiate quality as well as quantity amongst pleasures, and to bid that the higher pleasure be followed is surreptitiously to introduce a moral order, for 'higher' can only be a mark of moral quality. Martineau is inclined to regard the confusion of the two as arising from the late date at which utilitarian theories appear. When moral habits have become fixed it is possible to forget their origin, and to regard them as originating in self-interest, or public interest, rather than in the categorical imperative of a Higher than we.

The refutation of the alternative involves, in Martineau's opinion, the guarantee of his own explanation. Its immediacy he regards as undeniable, and, if it is not the voice of man, it is surely the voice of God. 'Just as in perception we are immediately introduced to an *other than*

*ourselves that gives us what we feel*, so in the act of conscience we are immediately introduced to a *Higher than ourselves which gives us what we feel.*'<sup>1</sup> The guarantee is the same in each case, our natural trust in our faculties. Upon this fundamental belief in something external to us depends our physical knowledge; upon a like basis is founded our moral knowledge. This fact Martineau thinks undeniable, disregarded only at peril of moral suicide. The manner in which the fact is interpreted matters little: 'I care not whether this is to be called an *immediate vision* of God in the experiences of conscience, or whether it is to be taken as an *inference* drawn from the data they supply. It is the truth contained in them.'<sup>2</sup> Martineau further assumes that this Higher than we cannot be a thing, but must be a Person—a conclusion more sound than the reason upon which it is based, which, whilst it may be true, is not so true as Martineau deems it to be.

### *Unity of the Inference from Cause and Conscience*

In order formally to complete his construction, Martineau produces three reasons for the identification of the Will he has discovered behind phenomena with the Law-giver revealed by conscience: (1) We unite in our persons subjection both to moral and to physical law, inseparably intertwined. (2) Our springs of action are aroused by the external world: the data of conscience are found in life

<sup>1</sup> *Study of Religion*, vol. ii. p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 28.

and humanity, and its problems set by the conditions these impose. (3) The discipline required by moral law is enforced by physical law. Perhaps, however, the strongest argument for the identification is one which Martineau does not urge—the gratuitous dualism which would otherwise be set up.

A consideration of the problems of pain and evil, which follows the usual lines, completes Martineau's task. He concludes by stating that the two aspects he has dwelt upon are only separate in human apprehension, not in the divine existence. Martineau's satisfaction with his method is shown by his statement that other sources of approach, such as speculative theology and the study of religions (oddly called 'historical mythology'), in so far as they are valid, can easily be resolved upon the lines he has adopted.

The attributes of God are deduced separately from each source. From the first are inferred those of Omnipotence, Unity, Intelligence, Infinity, and Eternity; from the second, Benevolence towards sentient beings, Justice towards moral beings, and Amity towards like minds—that is to say, 'beings that have attained a moral harmony,' to use Martineau's phrase. 'Other predicates might doubtless be named.'

The treatment has been individualistic, but Martineau holds that we discover like experiences in others, and hence infer that God stands in one relation to all of us, and that our united human life constitutes a kingdom of God, and necessarily involves a theocratic conception of society; for, just as nature constitutes throughout 'one intel-

lectual organism,' so humanity constitutes 'one moral organism.' In the one God is the 'informing thought,' in the other God is the 'spiritual authority,' and raised to a higher plane, knowledge and duty are seen together, in the light of the God who is one and the same in each.

§ 5. *The Strength and Limitations of Martineau's Philosophy of Religion*

In lucidity of arrangement and simplicity of argument Martineau's religious philosophy is unrivalled. It is pre-eminently an expression of his character as well as of his thought—strong, sincere, and transparent. I know of no system which can approach it in directness, intelligibility, and clearness of construction. Desirable, however, as the qualities are, closer examination tends to show that they have not been purchased without some avoidance of alternatives. This is particularly manifest in Martineau's treatment of what he regards as primary intuitions. How often he falls back upon this resource he neither acknowledges nor seems to realize. In his ethics, not only is the sense of right and wrong an inexplicable intuition, but the relative moral worth of any two springs of action is taken to be intuitively given upon their simultaneous appearance. In dealing with causality he judges that, by an intuition, we realize that in our own will we have a direct sense of cause, and by another intuition is it realized that there exists an external cause, which is interpreted similarly as Will. In the argument based



upon conscience appeal is made to the intuition of a 'Higher than we.' Religion itself is primarily such an intuition. Martineau has been censured for not giving this frequent resource more open acknowledgement, and the validity of at least some of these intuitions has been challenged.

The mistake, however, lies not so much in relying upon intuition as in an over-estimation of its extent. Martineau speaks of his foundations as arguments from cause and conscience. Fundamentally, however, he builds upon moral experience; but the experience he falls back upon is an individual experience like his own, that of a fully developed intellect, will, and conscience, dwelling in the clearer regions of consciousness. He tacitly assumes that this individual experience is a type of universal experience, that what is true and right for it is true and right for all. Martineau's results, however, cannot be applied equally to all fields of experience. In the lower strata of intellect and conscience, in the vaguer and blinder regions of consciousness, they fail. They have been constructed without reference to these, and they work smoothly only when such reference is still kept from them.

Even within the sphere in which Martineau dwells, it is by no means certain that intuition is so invariable as he presumes. One of his ethical suppositions, that the relative moral worth of two simultaneous springs of action is intuitively given, has already been mentioned. An example will show how doubtful the presumption is. A correspondent asked Martineau's opinion upon the following

case<sup>1</sup>: 'A schoolfellow, to save his mother's life, and consequently to shield his young sisters and brothers from orphanhood, told her every day until she recovered a certain lie which injured no one. Did he sin?' Martineau's reply that 'the Reverence for Veracity (which is a composite, not a simple, principle) would stand higher than filial affection,' is an academic judgement more convincing in the lecture-hall than the sick-room. Many competent moralists would deny it utterly. Such a case is enough to show how impossible it is to rely to the extent that Martineau does on the invariability of intuition. The difficulties would increase indefinitely if Martineau's ethical or religious philosophy were brought to bear upon cases where, in the dawn of intellectual light, the moral sense is slowly emerging into existence.

It must be held, therefore, that, in general, Martineau expects too much from intuitions, and in building arguments upon them over-estimates the similarity of their deliverances in varying circumstances. He is justified in pleading that we must trust our primary faculties, and much of what he takes to be intuitively realized may be allowed, although the assumption of self-evidence may seem to be made too often. The error is less in the reliance upon intuitions than in the refusal to acknowledge alternative interpretations of them. He shows that they *may* receive a certain interpretation; he concludes that they *must* bear it.

This might have been to a large extent avoided

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Upton, *Dr. Martineau's Philosophy*, pp. 145, 146.

had Martineau chosen a wider basis. He builds upon ethical, which is shown to be religious, experience in a certain individual aspect, without reference to historical, psychological, and anthropological factors, which would have greatly modified certain of his conclusions. This narrowness of base is responsible for the rather too rigorous ethicalism of Martineau's views, which in its turn limits him to one aspect of religion, and one avenue to the holiest only—the moral sense. Feeling and will do not gain due recognition in Martineau's system. It is perfectly true that the religion of a certain type of mind is ethical, but that type is by no means universal—indeed, not even common—nor is the sense of duty the only janitor of the heavenly gates.

I say this advisedly, for, despite Martineau's use of causality, I believe the ethical argument ultimately to be his sole basis. How obviously his view of cause as (free) will is inspired by his ethical belief has already been noted. Such a view would only be possible to one approaching the subject with strong ethical presumptions. Martineau himself, however, does not claim more for this view than that it is as natural and sufficient as any other. That is to say, he admits the possibility of an entirely different standpoint, and does not consider that the argument from causality, taken alone, is sufficient. However feasible Martineau's explanation may be, his Theism would have a precarious tenure if it rested upon that alone. Its real foundation, therefore, clearly is in the other base, and Martineau's argument from causality is rather supplementary to, than co-ordinate with, its fellow, deriving its chief strength

from it. For, regarding God as revealed in the moral sense of man, Martineau can show that the universe can be interpreted in a manner harmonious to this conclusion. His arrangement deals first with cause, then with conscience, but the order of his thought implies the reverse direction.

The ethical stringency of Martineau's standpoint is also responsible for one or two of the minor defects of his work. His championship of free-will, of the causal self over and above the caused self—a fact perhaps better expressed by speaking of the caused and causal aspects of self—is almost too relentless. Martineau does not make enough allowance for the power of habit, custom, inclination, circumstance, and the even worse mortgagees that hold a bond on our wills. It may well be that our freedom is a divine entail which, however heavily mortgaged, can never be alienated absolutely; but Martineau treats the will as moving unhampered, instead of giving a fuller recognition to the fact that the heavily-weighted will naturally inclines to the line of least resistance, and leaves it only with a struggle.

A further issue from the same source is the absence of any adequate conception of God as Love. Martineau's Deity is an amiable yet august, an impartial yet awe-inspiring Being, whose presence within brings with it the hush with which the law-courts are stilled when the judge takes his seat. It is significant that Martineau chooses the term 'reverence' rather than love as a name for the highest motive. In short, God is primarily the Law-giver, secondly the Father. It is His law which reveals Him, His command in the conscience which

first awakes men to His presence, and they are never allowed to forget that they came to know Him first as the embodiment of the categorical imperative. It is a stern and austere conception, which hinges on duty rather than love, on obligation rather than goodness. Martineau's intuition of God is interpreted in terms of command not of persuasion; and in the sphere of morals, whilst it may prove of regulative value, it has little power to be productive of good.

This limitation involves Martineau in some defects of treatment. For example, in dealing with objections to the theistic inference, it is not an adequate comment upon the problem of pain to be told that God has 'laid down His equation,' and that some evils are necessary accompaniments of larger good. Yet that is virtually all Martineau has to say. The enigmas of Theism are indeed dark, but a better conception of God as Love would in more than one instance have stood Martineau in good stead in dealing with them.

One of the most remarkable limitations of Martineau's system is its comparative silence concerning the personality of God. It is certainly not the silence that so often covers indecision, but the urgency of the matter apparently is not realized by Martineau, who considers it enough to remark that, as a thing cannot be higher than a person, the God who is above persons must be a Person, and, as God possesses the attributes of rational and moral will, 'it is difficult to see why the same term should not be given' to God as to man—personality. Such bare statements establish nothing and are far from sufficient; and, considering the affinities that

exist between Martineau and Lotze, it is surprising that the two systems should differ so widely in the importance attached to this question. In treating of God's omnipotence, infinity, and eternity, Martineau makes no attempt to deal with the common objections that these attributes are incompatible with a legitimate use of the term 'personality.' He remarks, indeed, that personality cannot be denied to God without detriment to His infinity; for to deny personality is to deny its mark, which for Martineau is the power of preferential action, and hence to limit God's infinity. This statement, however, gives no help. It seems to me that in the same way it might be contended that the Deity must possess any quality that can be named, since its absence is at least a technical infringement of infinity. It is an argument more germane to the Absolute than to a personal God, and an objector would surely reply that preferential action no more constitutes personality than does the exercise of will or power. It would be urged that human personality exercises the power of preference within limits, which do not apply to the Infinite, and hence is on a different footing; and moreover that preferential action, being action in time, is not attributable to God. Thus, so far from damaging His infinity, the absence of the power of preferential action might be argued as one of its constituents. The truth of the matter seems to be that Martineau identifies divine personality with one only of its marks—divine free-will, and expresses himself as content to forgo the term 'personality,' if, in its place, another word can be supplied which



safeguards the divine power of preferential action. Hence the meagre treatment which he affords to the question. Once more, Martineau prefers ethical to religious requirements, for religion certainly desires a fuller and richer significance in the divine personality than the mere power of free choice.

One objection, however, to the divine personality Martineau seems to feel, though he never comes face to face with it, namely, that a personal self implies an other-than-self. In one or two passages he seems to treat of human selves as forming an other-than-self to God. The obvious dilemma that this introduces is, that either selves are eternal, or that God only becomes personal by the creation of persons. As Martineau has denied the first alternative, and no doubt would regard the second as intolerable, it must be concluded that these passages are not so to be interpreted.

Elsewhere he seems to regard God as containing within Himself these conditions. Though so far as I am aware he does not expressly admit it, his treatment of space and time, which are dealt with as if they were co-ordinately eternal with God, seems to suggest that in his practice, if not in his theory, these stand for the other-than-self. Martineau's handling of these topics is without question perplexing, and the critics have rushed upon him crying 'Dualism !' Yet I have not been convinced that, despite some awkward expression, Martineau actually means more than this, that space and time are the forms of the expression of the Divine Will. In this case his dualism is technical rather than serious, for all our monists somehow



slip into a virtual working dualism when they descend from God to the human world, however stoutly they assure us of the unimpeachable orthodoxy of their monism.

It is unfortunate, however, that Martineau does not treat more definitely of the relation of God to space, time, and even matter. That Martineau believed in the reality of time is certain from the very fact of his libertarianism. If his dualism means no more than this it may be regarded with equanimity. Possibly upon the other points Martineau never actually balanced up his opinions. At any rate it would seem so.

Perhaps it would not be harsh to say that the root of all the limitations of Martineau's thought is a certain latent deistic influence, which was potent in the Unitarianism of his early days, and never entirely shaken off. His alleged dualism, his somewhat external and judicial Deity, his strong individualism and neglect of due appreciation of the divine immanence, are all more or less the fruit of this deistic strain in his philosophical pedigree.

Notwithstanding this, such criticism as can be passed upon Martineau from the standpoint occupied in this survey is evidently in detail rather than principle. How far Martineau has anticipated the contentions of Pragmatists and personalists of the present day must have been evident. His defence of free-will, his 'pluralism,' his championship of the common-sense trust in our primary faculties, are all analogous to the Pragmatists' contentions. Moreover, his insistence upon the personal nature of religion and its individual revelation accords with

the view of the philosophy of religious experience, even though the latter prefer to treat belief in God more immediately than Martineau, who describes it as an inference from such intuitions as those of causality, obligation, and beauty.

Though by taking this course Martineau loses hold somewhat of the immediacy that characterizes religious feeling, he thereby enriches knowledge by his skilful power of argument. The conception of cause as will is not new, but Martineau's insistence upon the incongruity of treating cause as will, yet not as preferential will, is a real gain. His reverence for the high authority of conscience is a needful antidote to the criticism, which possibly in reaction from moralists under Butler's influence, indulges in comments upon 'the conscience of an ass' and like aphorisms, which whilst a reminder that conscience is not infallible, tend to obscure the fact that it is a normal guide. From the perils of such a reaction Martineau saves and rehabilitates the authority of conscience.

Martineau's philosophy is thoroughly British, and in its main features represents the British religious mind untouched by German speculation, although Martineau had personal as well as literary acquaintance with German modes of thought. Britain has not been strong in religious philosophers, but in Martineau she has produced a characteristic type. His philosophy is less of a system and more of the expression of a personality, and as long—and may it be long—as Martineau's type of mind exists, there will exist also the influence of a philosophy so characteristically expressive of it.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY OF ACTIVISM : PROFESSOR RUDOLF EUCKEN

#### § 1. *Professor Eucken's Standpoint*

DURING recent years, mainly owing to the translative and expository work of a small group of British admirers, notably Mr. and Mrs. Boyce Gibson, the philosophy of Professor Eucken, of Jena, has become familiar in this country. A commanding and original type of thought, it seems destined to influence here, as in Germany, where it has already attracted very considerable notice. Pfeiderer has referred to its author as the 'Emerson of Germany,' and some of the most competent judges in that country forecast for Professor Eucken's thought a central position in future religious philosophy.

To select an appropriate description is always a primary difficulty in the delineation of any philosophical mode of thought. It is to be hoped, however, that the vague epithet 'The New Idealism' will not become its permanent badge. It might be applied at the present time with no less appropriateness to more than one type of thought, and in the future must inevitably lose even such meaning

or propriety as it may now possess. Under the circumstances it seems better to follow Professor Eucken's own denotation,<sup>1</sup> Activism, which is at least distinctive and characteristic.

In general Professor Eucken's philosophy is to be described as a mediating type. Essentially personalistic, it is also anti-individualistic; essentially a philosophy of freedom, it is also an absolutism. Amongst the early influences of his philosophical career, the chief were the 'panentheism' of Krause, and the system of Krause's pupil and Professor Eucken's master, Reuter. The influence of Hegel has left obvious marks, but Professor Eucken is entirely free from the rigid intellectualism by which Hegelianism is ice-bound. He is emphatically an anti-intellectualist. These apart, the modern direct influence is not strong, but the spirit of the times breathes in Professor Eucken's philosophy, which is distinctly modern in tone. An early interest in Aristotle has had some share in the later development of his thought, and few writers have more systematically sought to extract the significance of the history of philosophy than he. The historical insight is his in no small degree, and it is ministered to by a spirit that regards other systems rather as inadequate or one-sided presentations of truth than as tissues of error.

Professor Eucken constructs his philosophy with constant polemic reference to Naturalism and Intellectualism: Naturalism, because it is the philosophy of the sensuous as opposed to the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Life of the Spirit*, p. xi., and *Grundlinien einer Neuen Lebenanschauung*, p. 210.

spiritual life ; Intellectualism, because it is the philosophy of the abstract as opposed to the active life ; both, because each depersonalizes man. A further antipathy is displayed towards Individualism, which is associated, in a manner rather too sweeping, with Naturalism.

It is characteristic of Professor Eucken's opposition to Naturalism and Intellectualism that he views them as wrong, not because they are irrational or impossible—he does not challenge them on such grounds—but because they are expressions of the wrong kind of life. His philosophy is a philosophy of life, and he regards every philosophy as the expression of a type of life. The old conception of philosophy as the noblest life faded, and philosophy came to be regarded as the adjunct of life, a pleasing intellectual gymnasium. Against such a view Professor Eucken's system is a spirited protest. Philosophy he judges to be vitally a part of life, and its true function life's inspiration, quickening life's work by the revelation of man's deepest ideals.

This insistence upon philosophy in relation to life, this stress upon the concrete significance of philosophy, further distinguishes Professor Eucken from Intellectualism, and links him with Pragmatism. He seeks for the meaning and value of life rather than for a logical world-system, and finds it in an independent spiritual life, which is the basis of reality. The spiritual life, which becomes the fundamental note of Professor Eucken's system, is interpreted in a manner which is also reminiscent of Pragmatism, and gives to Professor Eucken's views their characteristic designation of Activism. The

spiritual life is essentially spiritual work or action ; thereby its meaning and value are revealed ; thereby, too, philosophy and life make their progress. Action can even do more : it can solve what to contemplation is insoluble, for Professor Eucken boldly leaves to the unfolding of the spiritual life the problems which now appear as impossible of solution, maintaining that the only method of obtaining an answer is not speculative but practical, and holding that by action they will sooner or later be solved.

Professor Eucken's method is at once analytic and synthetic. In the former aspect it is referred to as reductive, in the latter as noölogical. The method of reduction is particularly illustrated in his treatment of history. He aims at grasping the distinctive and fundamental ideas of each thinker or school, and dealing with particular views or doctrine in the light of them. The nature of any issue must be regarded in the context of the whole, and multiplicity in the light of unity. The reductive method works 'from within outwards,' and finds the significance of the past in its influence upon the present.

In its synthetic aspect the method is designated noölogical in opposition to psychological. Professor Eucken, though willing to start from experience as it is for the experient, will not interpret it from this standpoint, but inverts it to read it in the light of the metaphysic of the spiritual life. Despite many affinities with psychological religious philosophy, Professor Eucken displays a mistrust of psychology not always easy to understand. His noölogical method is more directly opposed to the psychological, with which he has affinities, than to the

cosmological, with which he has none. Following upon the reductive, its function is to trace out the principles the latter reveals in their own immanent applications. As he conceives it, his system does not apply itself to religion, it is intrinsically religious, and his philosophy is a religious philosophy in its very nature. For him not only is religion a life, but life a religion.

A voluminous writer, he has published many works illustrating his convictions, some of the chief of which are now happily available in English translations.<sup>1</sup> It is evident that a certain sympathy of outlook is needed for the interpretation of a system so characteristically original as that of Professor Eucken, and without it little understanding is possible. A further difficulty is found in his style, which is too prolific in words, and often lacks incisiveness in consequence. Such fluency, whilst adding to mental ease in reading, tends to make exactness of representation difficult. It is hoped, however, that from neither cause has any injustice been done in the following pages to the Jena professor's stimulating thought.

## § 2. *Professor Eucken's Doctrine of the Spiritual Life*

The term 'Spiritual Life' (*Geistesleben*) bears a special sense in Professor Eucken's vocabulary,

<sup>1</sup> A list of Prof. Eucken's principal works is appended to Mr. Boyce Gibson's *Rudolf Eucken's Philosophy of Life* (2nd ed. 1907), p. 181. Further translations under the titles *Christianity and the New Idealism*, *The Meaning and Value of Life*, *The Life of the Spirit*, and *The Problem of Human Life*, have since appeared.



and lies at the centre of his philosophy.<sup>1</sup> It is described as a 'new and authentic reality,' and as reality its existence is necessarily incapable of strict 'proof.' In its primary sense reality must always be given. Professor Eucken finds by direct appeal to human experience the antithesis within that experience of the natural and the spiritual life. The spiritual life is within us, directly given. He holds this as axiomatic, and justifies it not only by reference to the failure of both Intellectualism and Naturalism completely to assess the fullness of life with which philosophy must deal, but by its own uplifting influence upon life. The manner in which he elucidates this conception, or, as he would style it, movement—a term which reveals at once his radical mistrust of Intellectualism, reaching even to its terminology, and his activistic proclivity—is the best introduction to its significance.

He begins by considering the function of philosophy.<sup>2</sup> Admitting its influence on life and thought, why, he asks, should it be too often attacked as useless, and why is it, and has it always been, so dislocated by divisions? These objections must be met by a right conception of the work and place of philosophy. It is not merely a co-ordination of the sciences, nor is it the subjective expression of great thinkers' personalities, though both of these represent one of its aspects. Nor can it be regarded as an expression of the logical implications of thought, for regarding these no unanimity can be reached.

<sup>1</sup> To mark this specialized sense, and avoid confusion, the term is here printed in capitals throughout.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Life of the Spirit*, pp. 1-29.

Thought is a human function, and if things are to conform to thought a human interpretation of reality, which may be alien to reality itself, arises. There must be 'some sort of inner connexion with the universe in our thinking.' Philosophy, therefore, must be regarded as dealing not merely with thought as such but with life—'life as it co-ordinates itself from within to some sort of unified whole.' The foundation of thought is its connexion with life. Its root and basis are there.

But even in life there is division, different types. Which type is to be regarded as 'definitive' of reality? More than this, how can a movement which arises in man go beyond him and put him into touch with understanding of the wide sphere which envelops his individual self? The answer to these questions is given in the conception of the spiritual life. If thought is to be based upon life, and yet possess power in it, and have a more than subjective character, man must be able to reach a wider life which can overcome the divisions, and become more than a passive solution, an active influence in shaping reality. It must be a universal life, rescuing man from his mere individuality, and in such a life only can thought give true knowledge, not mere cognition.

Is there evidence of such a life, of such a new way of looking upon the world? Professor Eucken answers Yes. A clear idea of the significance of spiritual life supplies it. 'Spiritual life is, above all, the formation of a coherent system in life.' It has reference not merely to the subject but to an objective realm, in co-operation with which the

subject both develops himself and assists in the development of the object. Thus man finds that which goes beyond him and transforms the merely human in him. For Professor Eucken henceforth philosophy is regarded as an expression of spiritual life in this express sense of the term, and the life thus conceived, the Spiritual Life, becomes his sole concern.

The question is then asked, 'What is the significance of this new life in relation to the whole of reality?' In the natural realm psychical life is simply concomitant. The Spiritual Life introduces a new kind of life, where life is independent and creative. This change Professor Eucken refuses to believe to be the work of man by himself, but rather is it the movement of the whole of reality towards an independent conscious existence. Within the Spiritual Life our work becomes not accessory to, but a part of, the world-movement. Similarly philosophy is to be considered as not imposed upon reality, but an expression of reality from within, and still further, not as a passive expression of its unfolding but an active agent therein.

Arising from this, the character of the Spiritual Life is further defined. It is oppositional and activist. It is oppositional, in the first place, because it has no independent starting-point, but develops out of our human nature, starting from various points therein. This is at once its attraction and its opposition. Its attraction, since it comes to us not as something foreign to our nature, but as something developing from it; its opposition in that, if it be rooted in the common clay of humanity

it rises to the heavens, and collides with the purely human and natural, by leading man to the universal and supra-natural. It arises in nature, but struggles free from nature. The birth of the Spiritual Life is always with travail.

But the Spiritual Life does not merely start in struggle. It develops by struggle. Oppositions are native to it. All oppositions, whether they be those of good and bad, freedom and dependence, egoism and absolutism, immanence and transcendence, arise with man's Spiritual Life, and within it, too, are solved. Its development is by means of conquered, progressively conquered, oppositions.

Professor Eucken's Activism comes into play in the method by which he seeks to reconcile the oppositions thus aroused. He regards self-activity as the essence of self-consciousness, persisting and insisting that in activity rather than by intellectual concepts the solution of fundamental antinomies is to be gained. In personal action, in work, he declares, a solution of the problem of subject and object is provided. It is only in action that the differentiation of the two presents itself; it is by action that their opposition is loosened. For personality in action includes and enfolds the objectivity within itself. This provides Professor Eucken with a clue and key to the solution of all antinomies. The Spiritual Life is the common work of humanity, the cosmic movement in which all humanity shares. By this uniting quality, which is denoted as *Inbegriff*, the Spiritual Life becomes the whole of existence; viewed externally it is the World Life, viewed from within, the Spiritual Life. From this latter standpoint

Professor Eucken thinks it may be regarded as personal, sharing in this the characteristic of personality that its experience is oppositional, and further in this, that, just as in personal action the solution of the opposition of subject and object is afforded, so in the movement of the Spiritual Life comes the solution of its own antinomies.

A comparison and contrast with Hegel may make the matter clearer. For Professor Eucken every spiritual fact is potentially a spiritual opposition, even as for Hegel a thesis suggested an antithesis. In contrast, however, Hegel offers an intellectual solution, Professor Eucken an activistic solution. Hegel attacks the opposition conceptually, Professor Eucken concretely. Hegel's solution claims completeness, Professor Eucken's is still in the making. The Spiritual Life has the potency of a content, but it is not ready-made nor yet complete. It is progressive, and for its completion it must await hopefully the issues of its future unfolding and development.

Professor Eucken's philosophy has two movements, negative and positive. The negative movement is essential before the Spiritual Life can be attained by man. From the natural to the spiritual there is no smooth development; there must be a definite break, a renunciation, though not in the ascetic sense, of the natural. The positive movement succeeding the breach which the negative has thus made, is regarded as a redemptive process bringing life into sympathy and harmony with spiritual ideals. Professor Eucken lays much stress upon the break that the negative movement implies,

to the extent of considering that failure to appreciate its importance constitutes the radical defect of many philosophical systems. He views the Spiritual Life, though grounded in the natural life, as no natural development of it, but as a development which can only proceed after a definite break from the natural has taken place.

Life, therefore, as Professor Eucken views it, is twofold—natural and spiritual. To renounce the natural entirely is impossible, nor can any development of the spiritual obliterate it. At the same time he presents the alternative, either the natural or the spiritual, sharply. The question is one of ascendancy. Either the natural or the spiritual must fall; both may exist, but one only shall command. The negative movement is the dethronement of the natural, the positive movement the enthronement of the spiritual, with the consequent assessment of all life's values from the spiritual standpoint. A still further consequence of the ascendancy of the spiritual is that it comes to be recognized as independent, not a mere attribute of the natural order but as having life in itself. This independence must not be taken to imply that the Spiritual Life is alien to man, for in it he lives and moves and has his being; it is not simply the ideal but the expression of his life. Lastly, the negative movement, by dethroning the natural, inverts the order that the natural is real and the spiritual accessory. The spiritual directly reveals itself as the more primary and immediate, and the natural must justify itself in the light of the spiritual, not the spiritual in the light of the natural. The Spiritual Life becomes not a



vague appanage of the sense-world, but a definite movement of reality.

Professor Eucken's doctrine of the Spiritual Life is supported by a particular and important estimate of the relation of history to philosophy.<sup>1</sup> He regards the development of the historical temper and method as the most characteristic achievement of the last century, and the significance of that method lies in its regarding the present as 'a link in a continuous chain,' in its finding 'in Becoming a clue to the Knowledge of Being.' For mere historicity, the chronicle of a time-sequence, he has nothing but contempt. The significance of history itself is to be found in its present influence, the past has its value in its power in the present. For Professor Eucken history is regarded truly only when it is seen, not as a mere collection of past facts, but as living with new spiritual meaning and influence in the present. A further question arises as to the manner in which the past can thus be gathered up into the present, and this is answered by the reply that, as free personal beings, we can appropriate the past, assimilate it, live into it, make it our own. It cannot be mechanically handed down; each must reappropriate it for himself, and bring it into vital and potent connexion with his own life. The general characteristics of Professor Eucken's philosophy receive further illustration by this insistence upon the past, not as a study, but as a power in life, and

<sup>1</sup> The best illustration of Prof. Eucken's historical method is to be found in *The Problem of Human Life*. Reference may also be made to *Christianity and the New Idealism* (*Hauptprobleme der Religionsphilosophie der Gegenwart*), ch. ii.



the insistence upon the appropriation of the past as an expression of vital spiritual activity.

A fact for Eucken is not an isolated event, but a *Lebens-system*; a fact of history is a movement, a whole. Isolated events are abstractions from facts. What are commonly called facts he denotes as sense-impressions, phenomena; fact is not that which is given, but that which is reached. The facts of history are rather to be regarded as processes which express themselves in the present.

In short, history, in Professor Eucken's philosophy, means not critical, scientific, historical research—that is merely its outpost. Historical evolution knows neither choice nor decision, but in Professor Eucken's view there cannot be history without these. History has had its influence throughout by the free personal appropriation of the past; and, in thus entering into and living in the present—the eternal or time-including present, as he calls it—its own life has been preserved.

It will by this time have become manifest that behind Professor Eucken's doctrine of the Spiritual Life lies a distinctive and particular theory of knowledge. Knowledge, as he conceives it, is not knowledge of reality as a thing apart, but an essential part of reality, an element 'inside'—if the metaphor be permitted—reality. Epistemology is a part of the Spiritual Life. In the unfolding of the Spiritual Life knowledge develops, and its limits are set, not by intellectual conditions, but solely by the extent to which the realization of the Spiritual Life may be attained. The Spiritual Life is declared to possess its own categories, which are not those of, nor

properly accessible to, the simply logical understanding; but, as the Spiritual Life develops, its own categories deepen and develop with it, with increasing adequacy as there is increasing need. Professor Eucken joins the pragmatists in protesting that the world of physical science and the world of intellectualist philosophy do not either separately or conjointly exhaust reality, and he is one with them in the insistence that the material of philosophy is experience in its concreteness; but by his own *Erkenntnisstheorie* he attempts to scoop the whole of reality into his system by a single stroke, both the reality that is, and that which is to be.

This characterization may be concluded by noticing how Professor Eucken meets certain possible objections.<sup>1</sup> It may be thought that a certain dualism is introduced, and that the natural, like the 'matter' of Plotinus, lies as a dark foil to the spiritual, reduced to impotence but not to be reduced to nothing. Professor Eucken, however, admits that, at last resort, one and the same life is active both as natural and as spiritual, but in the former it is seen fractured, in the latter as a whole.

The independence of the Spiritual Life he also acknowledges to be a conception contrary to the usually received ideas. It cannot obtain strict proof, but it is demanded by the very functions the Spiritual Life exercises. It could be no unifying power otherwise, and could have no meaning. To deny it is to reduce everything to the naturalistic level, and to display everything above that level as a hollow unreality. Moreover, if it has originated

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Meaning and Value of Life*, p. 85 seq., p. 117 seq.

from, and is dominated by, a naturalistic basis, why is it that its mandates are so often contrary to naturalistic impulses and desires? The Spiritual Life can only be properly understood as independent.

The third objection centres itself in the continual thwarting of the spiritual by the natural, in the abuse of the Spiritual Life by human interests, in the divisions internal with the Spiritual Life : do not these cancel both its independence and authority? Professor Eucken's reply is too long and circumlocutory to be reproduced even in summary, but it takes the following lines—that these considerations do not compel the abandonment of the conclusions already gained. An appeal to history is taken as revealing the triumph of spirituality over material power. Further, man's present existence is part of a wider and greater order, and as such cannot expect to be in possession, from the standpoint of the part, of the solution of the problems of the whole. The Spiritual Life presents itself in three stages which cannot be dissociated—as sustaining, as militant, and triumphant; the fact, moreover, that the Spiritual Life is not the peaceful development of the natural order, but is born by open rupture with it, reveals the struggle as inevitable, for the self-expression of the Spiritual Life is by nature of its opposition to the natural.

Finally Professor Eucken sketches some ways in which the Spiritual Life bears upon modern life. ' In the first place, it should increase our discontent with the life of mediocrity; in the second place, it should help us to draw through the confusions of our social life certain clear defining lines; and

thirdly, it should offer us a standing ground, where we can seek to rally our forces.' <sup>1</sup>

It is characteristic of Professor Eucken that he desires to see some concrete attempt at a deeper realization of the Spiritual Life in the life of our time.<sup>2</sup> He considers that a new movement is needed to realize and cherish independent spirituality, and fears that without some such co-operation the independence of the Spiritual Life will decay, and it will be merely an element in a life otherwise naturalistic. What practical steps he would take does not appear, but the appeal is interesting as witnessing once again how vitally life and philosophy are bound together in Professor Eucken's mind.

### § 3. *The Spiritual Life as a Religious Philosophy*

So completely does the term Spiritual Life circumscribe the bounds of Professor Eucken's philosophy that under it every aspect of his position, every doctrine he develops, may be included. The general characterization of the Spiritual Life may now be more closely particularized with a view to ascertaining its suitability to the requirements of a religious philosophy. In order to do so it will be necessary to glance at the religious interpretation of the Spiritual Life, and its relation to the four fundamentals of a religious philosophy—God, human personality, free-will, and personal immortality.

The requirements of religion are stated admirably by Professor Eucken in the following terms: 'It is

<sup>1</sup> *Meaning and Value of Life*, p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 142 seq.; cf. also *Problem of Human Life*, p. 565 seq.

essential to religion that the Higher Power in our midst should be not merely an influence but a living Presence, and that our relationship to this Presence should not be just any sort of relation, but one in which our whole nature is involved.' <sup>1</sup> The intellectualist answer to this requirement he considers untenable since Kant's Critique demolished the hopes of the *Aufklärung*, and he inclines to view the reaction from intellectualism as of too subjective a character, or at least as liable to degenerate into subjectivism by dealing with man in an isolated rather than a universal sense. Intellectualism tends to make man a mere part of the universe, a religion of feeling to isolate him therefrom; what is required is a synthesis which will give a 'cosmic significance' to man's experience, and reveal the many as the development and expression of the one. 'The real question is whether we are able, through the active concentration of our powers, to detect the working of the cosmic life within us. On the answer to this question depends the whole possibility of grounding religion within the soul.' <sup>2</sup>

The Spiritual Life is held to afford the answer required. It is no 'succession of momentary associations,' but 'an entirely new life,' an 'independent cosmic power.' This in itself, however, is insufficient, for the mere existence of Higher Power is not a basis for religion. The power must be in relation to us, must manifest itself in us, and create a new and higher life opposing the lower and sensuous, the 'natural' order. That the Spiritual Life

<sup>1</sup> *Christianity and the New Idealism*, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6.

can answer this requirement must be shown by manifesting the fact that it actually is doing so. This Professor Eucken unhesitatingly asserts. In this way it is held that the Spiritual Life is necessarily connected with religion. It is contended that it fulfils the essential requirement of a religion that, though based on human experience, it should lift man above his own sphere. The Spiritual Life answers this demand by being at once man's life and that which raises him above the self-centredness of natural individual life. The certainty of religion is the certainty of the Spiritual Life, and Professor Eucken is surely not exaggerating when he points out that from the naïve assumption of the immediacy of sense-knowledge the whole progress of culture leans further and further away, until the unseen replaces the seen as the centre of immediacy as truly as the Copernican point of view replaced the Ptolemaic.

For religion, it is therefore claimed, there is the firmest basis of security. 'Religion is not a supplementary adjunct to the Spiritual Life, but is essential and native to it; nay, more, is the fundamental condition under which alone the Spiritual Life can realize itself within human experience.'<sup>1</sup> The Spiritual Life is the inclusive whole of reality, and the more closely the part is linked to the whole the more it participates in its certainty. This may be a justification of the Spiritual Life as a religion, but it is hardly a doctrine of God. It will be necessary to return to the subject of God and the Spiritual Life subsequently, and attention must now pass to the second point—human personality. Professor

<sup>1</sup> *Christianity and the New Idealism*, p. 28.



Eucken's insistence upon this subject is unpromising, and whether his view of personality is to be regarded as finally satisfactory or not, it is at least a calculated attempt to mediate between the rigidity of a stringent individualism and the vagueness of the pantheizing monistic absorption of personality. It is avowedly anti-individualistic, although the opposition to individualism is strengthened by the somewhat gratuitous assumption already noticed that all individualism is ultimately naturalistic.

On the other hand, it avoids much of the weakness of the usual forms of Monism by a frank recognition of being for self (*Fürsichsein*), which lies at the basis of personality. That is accepted as a fundamental fact, and whatever development beyond bare *Fürsichsein* may be necessary before personality in the sense in which Professor Eucken regards it is obtained, the fundamental being-for-self is never lost. Enlarged it may be, but not absorbed.

Professor Eucken defines his view of personality upon activist lines.<sup>1</sup> His interest is in personality in action, transforming and enveloping objective fact, not merely personality *qua* personality, the bare fact in itself. Personality realizes itself only in the Spiritual Life. Following upon his conception of work as the unity of subject and object, the Spiritual Life may thus be regarded as at once the expression of the life of a person and the life of a world. Since the being-for-self is never lost, personality cannot be deprived of its independence in the Spiritual Life; but, since the Spiritual Life is universal, the indi-

<sup>1</sup> *Die Einheit des Geisteslebens*, p. 354, and *Life of the Spirit*, p. 384.



vidual who gains it loses the closely-set bounds that hedge in his own individuality by sharing in this greater sphere, and becomes more than an isolated unit of individuality—becomes personal in the wider sense. In the Spiritual Life, which is essentially spiritual action, comes true personal realization.

From this point also Professor Eucken treats the Spiritual Life in its religious character. The action by which personality comes to realization is not the action of the ego solely; it may be contrary to the ego's direct interest. Nor is it the action of the Spiritual Life solely, for the ego never loses its *Fürsichsein*. It is the joint action of the personality and the Spiritual Life. He accordingly concludes that Spiritual Life must also be a personality, considering apparently that what stands over against and has power over personality must itself be more than a thing; it must be a person. From this point of view it may be identified with God, though Professor Eucken is surprisingly chary of the latter term, 'The Spiritual Life' being his almost invariable expression, and it cannot be accidental that he so systematically prefers to speak of *Geistesleben*, not *Gott*.

He binds up the doctrine of personality, however, indissolubly with the doctrine of the Spiritual Life. He regards the modern importance attached to personality as significant in that it is one way of asserting that man is intrinsically independent. Only upon the basis of personal life does he understand it possible to explain the formation of spiritual individuality within us, and only from a basis of independence is it possible to strive after unity.

Professor Eucken speaks somewhat disparagingly of 'the tendency to use personality lightly as a catchword and ready cure-all for every evil of the times,'<sup>1</sup> demanding that personality requires 'a content and cosmic setting.' 'Personality and individuality,' he remarks, 'far from being so-called facts, become difficult problems.'<sup>2</sup> Since, however, *Fürsichsein* is accepted, individuality to that extent at least is a fact even for Professor Eucken. It is rather 'spiritual individuality,' to use a frequent phrase in his writings, and personality that are the problems, and to these his attention is limited, for beyond the acceptance of being-for-self he shows little interest in it.

This acceptance is necessary not only to provide a basis for personality, but also a basis for freedom. Freedom of the will, being identified with the freedom of the Spiritual Life, is regarded as axiomatic. It is therefore assumed as an intuitive conviction that arises from action. As a spiritual fact it is also a spiritual opposition, its antithesis, equally certain on the same grounds, being absolute religious dependence. No solution of the difficulty is offered intellectually, for freedom is for Professor Eucken neither intellectually based nor intellectually defended. No light therefore is thrown upon the philosophical difficulties of freedom, the solution being left, as his custom is, to spiritual action.

Concerning immortality, Professor Eucken contents himself with the bare statement that, as a participant in the Spiritual Life, man is immortal.

<sup>1</sup> *Meaning and Value of Life*, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> *Christianity and the New Idealism*, p. 14.

The general treatment of the significance of the Spiritual Life lends itself to the support of the assertion, which, however, is not enlarged. Possibly he considers it unnecessary to do so, but a more definite treatment would at least be interesting.

To sum up, Professor Eucken's doctrine of the Spiritual Life is an idealism which lends itself very readily to an ethical and religious significance, whether or not one can agree with the statement that it is 'essentially a Christian philosophy of life, a restatement and development, in philosophical form, of the religious teaching of Jesus.'<sup>1</sup> The accent, in any case, would fall on 'development' rather than 'restatement.' Its negative movement or conversion process, its redemptive scheme, its personalism, and not least its activism, contribute towards its suitability as an expression of the needs of the religious consciousness. To what extent, however, it satisfies those needs is a further question which must now be approached.

#### § 4. *The Significance, Limits, and Value of Activism*

The novelty of Professor Eucken's position, based upon its own peculiar theory of knowledge, and developing by appeal to spiritual action rather than thought, makes it difficult to offer any estimate according to the usual canons and by the customary methods. He obliges his critics to meet him on his own chosen ground, where the advantage is his, and one can hardly refuse to do so simply because his

<sup>1</sup> Boyce Gibson, *Rudolf Eucken's Philosophy of Life*, p. 166.

standpoint is unorthodox. Taking therefore for the time being the activistic point of view, the first question that must be asked is whether the Spiritual Life is capable of the function assigned to it as the solution of oppositions. Stripped of its somewhat highly garnished terminology, Professor Eucken's great conviction amounts to this—that the problems of philosophy are life-oppositions which are only effectually to be overcome by spiritual action. Since his philosophy is confessedly a philosophy of a life that is still in the making, since it claims not to have attained but to be in process of attainment, a complete solution is not yet to be expected. The matter must be judged by indications. Are they favourable to the warm optimism with which Professor Eucken regards the process of the Spiritual Life?

Professor Eucken frankly appeals to Caesar, and to Caesar he must go. From the days of Plato even until now—from the days before Plato if it is preferred—the movement of the Spiritual Life can be watched, as it has continuously engaged itself with the same problems. It has alternated in phases. Like the line-drawings illustrated in text-books of psychology, at one moment convex, but, as the eye still regards them, changing to concave, so the outward aspect has varied, but the problems remain practically the same. Plato's 'Ideal' theory may be criticized by a tyro to-day, but not because the difficulty it was meant to relieve, the relation of appearance and reality, has been solved. Rather is it because the stage of thought where the Ideal theory could hold its place has terminated. Another couple of thou-

sand years may derogate from modern views in like manner without any more fundamental solution being necessarily attained. The terms in which manifoldness and unity are discussed to-day are modern, but can it be said that the actual problem is really nearer solution than when the Eleatics discussed the many and the one? The history of the Spiritual Life does not wholly lend itself to the expectation that Professor Eucken so steadfastly anticipates.

The Spiritual Life may survive—in Professor Eucken's view must survive—death; it may produce a nobler and wiser race on earth; but no appeal can be made to these contingencies, so that the only means of judging the possibilities of spiritual action is by the past, which at least is not obviously in favour of Professor Eucken's thesis. To say this does not imply scepticism or the abandonment of philosophy. It may be that true progress is found in the opening up of fresh standpoints, wider co-ordinations, larger conceptions. Even if the secrets of being are not disclosed, philosophy is neither barren nor stationary.

It is of course true that, upon Professor Eucken's theory of knowledge, with the unfolding of reality knowledge itself unfolds; but the potentialities of knowledge cannot promise that the future shall in this way redeem the past. It must also be admitted that Professor Eucken, intent upon the more immediate meaning and value of the Spiritual Life, pays far less attention to the ultimate problems than this criticism might suggest; but, as every philosophy must be judged by the manner in which it treats the

fundamental questions of experience, it is impossible not to inquire closely into his attitude towards them.

It must be held, therefore, that Professor Eucken has overestimated the possibilities of spiritual action. The effects of this overestimate are manifest in another way. Mr. Boyce Gibson, a most sympathetic expositor, admits a certain 'irrationalism' at the apex of Professor Eucken's system.<sup>1</sup> He sympathizes, not unjustly, with Professor Eucken's conviction that spiritual action yields intuitive certainties, which, whilst they may appear unintelligible to reason, are personally incontestable and valid. But Professor Eucken holds more than this: he declares that reason cannot deal with the things most fundamental, and must yield to the concrete solution of spiritual action. Yet upon his own principles knowledge is not external to but one with the Spiritual Life. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned, but the Spiritual Life has its own categories, and why should it be held that these categories are insufficient for the comprehension of reality? If the Spiritual Life is inclusive of reality, its categories, rightly interpreted, should be inclusive of reality also, and it is easy to understand the disappointment of his expositor that, after his principles had fostered this expectation, he should fall back into treating knowledge as if it were infra-spiritual.

If Professor Eucken insists that ordinary knowledge cannot attain to the interpretation of spiritual problems, can he expect the Spiritual Life to afford the solution of intellectual problems? It is true

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Rudolf Eucken's Philosophy of Life*, ch. vii.



that all oppositions, in one sense, are life-oppositions, and in so far as the problem is vital, only an activistic solution is possible; but, in another aspect, the crux of the opposition is principally intellectual. Can action or any development of action relieve an essentially intellectual difficulty *as intellectual*? For example, one of the problems that Professor Eucken handles—that of freedom with natural law on the one hand and omnipotence on the other. In neither aspect, so far as action goes, does it present any difficulty. It never arose as a problem at all until a certain stage of reflective thought was reached. The difficulty is purely intellectual. Yet there is no guarantee, nor, so far as I can see, possibility, of an intellectual solution by action. It is true that action is sometimes recommended in relief of religious doubt, and may allay the intellectual difficulty; but obviously it does so by the distraction of attention, possibly by the provision of a new standpoint from which the difficulty does not appear so large or threatening; but what is done is to remove the doubt as a source of trouble, not to solve it intellectually.

It would seem, therefore, as if the 'irrationalism' mentioned were really the recognition of this difficulty. Even if Mr. Gibson's suggestion were adopted and spiritual categories are acknowledged to be adequate to interpret spiritual realities, the solution offered is of a spiritual opposition, not of an intellectual difficulty. The intellectual *impasse* still exists, avoided but not met.

Professor Eucken is entirely within his rights if he should reply that this is the only possible solution



to expect ; but he certainly goes beyond them when he sets down intellectual antinomies as inseparable truths, and, when asked to substantiate the assertion, refers the account to the Spiritual Life for settlement. For example, he remarks that the natural and spiritual are both one life, but none the less irreconcilable. What, then, is the *ratio essendi* of the natural and its 'small I' ? Whence is it, why does it manifest itself ? *Ex hypothesi* it is not of the Spiritual Life, and since it is frequently asserted that man's freedom is only realized by co-operation with the divine, it seems impossible to account for it as arising from the misapplied choice of the individual himself. The natural ought not to exist, nevertheless it does ; but it is not easy to see, on Professor Eucken's principles, why or how it does. Yet once more Personalism, so it is said, implies Absolutism. If Personalism and Absolutism are declared to be incompatibles, Mr. Gibson thinks 'the retort is plain. The incompatibility may well depend upon the inadequacy with which the idea is held and developed.'<sup>1</sup> The retort may be plain, but is the adequate idea equally plain ? In exhibiting these oppositions as (at least potentially) unified in the Spiritual Life, Professor Eucken offers an ideal but not an idea. Can Mr. Gibson or Professor Eucken give an idea of a personality that is compatible with Absolutism ? Professor Eucken is entitled to believe that personality should be compatible with absolute divine unity. He is also entitled to contend that an intellectual solution of the difficulty is not forthcoming. He is even entitled to postulate the

<sup>1</sup> *Rudolf Eucken's Philosophy of Life*, p. 158.

ideal of these oppositions as ultimately harmonious spiritual facts, even though he affords no possible idea of their co-existence. But he does more. He obtains advances upon conceptions, the possibility of which is an unrealized ideal, in order to use them as instruments of philosophic thought. It is one thing, on the strength of the doctrine of the Spiritual Life, to expect the unification of antinomies, but another and wholly illegitimate thing to employ *as intellectual concepts* that which cannot be intellectually realized.

The Spiritual Life, and the exclusive emphasis laid upon action as its expression, is an *idée fixe* with Professor Eucken, but it is not the sole requirement of a religious philosophy. Religious feeling, communion, prayer, meditation, even faith, hope, and love, do not receive their due. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, it is true, but it is also written, 'Be still, and know that I am God.' Professor Eucken distinguishes between universal religion—the religion of the Spiritual Life—and characteristic religion. Such a characteristic religion is Christianity. But, though placing himself within it, Professor Eucken is only able to bring it into line with universal religion by treating with a very free hand the historical facts of that faith, which, from the standpoint already noticed, are phenomena, sense-impressions merely, whilst the real significance of Christianity is as a spiritual movement.

It is hardly possible, therefore, to endorse Professor Eucken's Idealism as the philosophical form of Christianity; and from the standpoint of psychology and history a system in which historical events are

subordinate to an interpretation which abstracts from their historicity in favour of an *a priori* and dogmatic conception of their significance (for with all respect to Professor Eucken's insistence upon the concrete reality of the Spiritual Life, the interpretation he gives to it must necessarily have an *a priori* character) is to be viewed with suspicion. 'The security of a speculative basis'<sup>1</sup> is dearly purchased when it involves the sacrifice of much of the historical form of religion. Professor Eucken affords fresh evidence of the fact, so often emphasized in these pages, that a speculatively based religious philosophy is always at war with concrete religion, yet concrete not philosophical religion is what a religious philosophy is called upon to elucidate. The historical psychological method will accept the investigation of scientific criticism upon the history and psychology of religion, but it repudiates entirely the free interpretation of religious events or beliefs from the speculative standpoint.

A further question of a more radical order arises. Professor Eucken gives the Spiritual Life a religious and ethical significance, and considers such a course obvious. Is it inevitable, however? Is the Spiritual Life essentially a religious conception? It would not be fair to Professor Eucken to suggest that it is really an ennobled and cosmically interpreted conception of what is on a lower level loosely called culture. He regards it as far more, but must it be? Its religious significance must stand or fall with its relation to God. Professor Eucken, it has

<sup>1</sup> Cf. a letter to Mr. Boyce Gibson quoted in *Rudolf Eucken's Philosophy of Life*, p. 12.

been noted, uses that term sparingly. Mr. Boyce Gibson has no such scruples, and speaks of 'God with us,' but it seems perfectly possible to adopt most of Professor Eucken's religious philosophy without any reference to a personal Being, a course that he has made easier by his attitude, and by his complete neglect of any attempt to describe the relation of man and God within the Spiritual Life. The constant contrast between the petty (*Kleinmenschlich*) and the heroic (*Grossgeistig*) sense-mediocrity and spiritual unity is really an aesthetical distinction between the paltry and the sublime. The doctrine of the Spiritual Life loses immensely in constraining power by its neglect of the will of a Personal Being. All its stress is laid upon man's endeavour; God's Will is a secondary thing. In short, Professor Eucken's system is by no means inevitably a religious idealism, and if some future Left Wing develop it upon non-theistic or even anti-theistic principles it will cause me no surprise. Any philosophy that forsakes immediate religious experience and depends upon inferential considerations is always liable to a non-religious interpretation in some form or other. Professor Eucken can establish no patent rights in the Spiritual Life, and his interpretation of it may easily be infringed, simply because it is not inevitable.

Few points are indeed more unsatisfactory in Professor Eucken's work than the relation of God and the Spiritual Life. At one time he seems to identify the two, especially when, upon rather slender grounds, he personifies the Spiritual Life. On the other hand, though the Spiritual Life is to

be understood as the Life of God, His immanence in the world, it is also the life of free personal beings, a life which man develops by his free activity. It would therefore seem more correct to regard God as implied in the Spiritual Life, but it is hardly possible to acquit Professor Eucken of considerable obscurity in his treatment of the being of God and the life of God. For this reason is it that the Spiritual Life is not inevitably a philosophy of religion. It is certainly possible to conceive of a higher life rooted in man's nature, yet lifting man above it, without regarding that life either as personal or as the life of God—God, that is to say, in the theistic as distinct from the intellectualistic sense, for in philosophy anything higher than man is only too commonly designated God. If Professor Eucken's philosophy is to be incontestably a philosophy of religion it will need to do as much justice to God as it does to man.

The affinities of Professor Eucken with the types of thought that follow in the description given in these pages—Pragmatism and Personal Idealism—have already been noticed. With the latter, as an intellectual method, he would have perhaps less sympathy, despite many similarities. As regards Pragmatism the comparison is somewhat closer. Both Activism and Pragmatism start from the same standpoint of complete experience, and both reject any mode of thought that is incapable of doing justice to it. Both are personalistic, emphasize action and freedom, seek the concrete and avoid the abstract. Pragmatism, however, is psychological, humanistic, anti-universalistic, pluralistic. Professor

Eucken is noölogical, anthropotheistic, universalistic, monistic.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Gibson repeatedly regrets a defective psychological insight in Professor Eucken and his identification of psychology with an out-dated associationism. But the question is not merely one of comprehension, it is one of basis and method. Professor Eucken's system amounts to a metaphysical realism. He justly replaces the naturalistic basis by the spiritual, but since the former is in possession, the psychological method, starting from its standpoint but leading beyond it, is preferable to a point-blank demand for an inversion of reality *ab initio*. It is better to start with the existential form of religion and to lead to its spiritual substance than to posit the substance and neglect the form. Even if the results could be the same, the psychological method can hope for a hearing from those who would reject the noölogical without scruple.

It is scarcely correct to view the humanistic standpoint of Pragmatism as making 'The welfare of mere man, whether as an individual or in society, its leading aim.'<sup>2</sup> Pragmatism at least aims at being a complete philosophy, not a utilitarian device. It desires, as Professor Eucken desires, to do justice to man, but does not forbid the reading of man as a part of a divine scheme.

As regards universalism, it may be potential or actual. Pragmatism does not forbid a really potential universalism, provided that potential

<sup>1</sup> For the relation of Pragmatism and Religious Idealism cf. Boyce Gibson, *God With Us*, ch. ix.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of the Spirit*, p. xi.

means possible, and not, as it is sometimes interpreted, inevitable. If universalism is, or is bound to be, actual, the doctrine of freedom becomes meaningless. One may start with Professor Eucken from the pluralism of concrete life and work to a Monism within the limits of freedom, provided the Monism is an ideal. But to desire a guaranteed ultimate Monism means the abolition of real freedom. The alternative God all operative and man self-determined is absolute. One may hope for, but cannot ensure, a final reconciliation. To combine the two as interdependent, as does Professor Eucken, and to regard man as free, is an anticipation, not a realization, of truth.

Professor Eucken's philosophy attempts a mediation between the monistic and pluralistic habits of thought, but the alternative is too absolute to allow of the intention being actually effected, and the mediator in most cases eventually settles on one or other side of the gap. Professor Eucken ends a monist. Mr. Gibson, who shows a deeper appreciation of the urgency of the alternative, and is conscious of the incompatibilities of Monism and freedom, makes an interesting attempt to divide the spoils by postulating a universe where love will have triumphed completely, yet evil will remain, not as an actuality but as an 'eternal possibility.'<sup>1</sup> With all respect to Mr. Gibson's argument, I am unable to see in it any more than a device to save the face of Monism. In the first place, a Monism with a latent contradictory possibility eternally shut up within it is far removed from absoluteness,

<sup>1</sup> *God With Us*, p. 223.



for a goodness that is impossible without an eternally possible contradictory is monistic in practice only, not in nature. But what guarantee can be offered that evil will ever become a possibility only, or that the possibility can never break into actuality again, especially in a Monism that has once produced a real pluralism? Mr. Gibson retorts that the nature of Love guarantees its ultimate triumph, and the nature of evil its extinction. Let us hope so; but this result is held merely as a matter of faith, and, so long as there is uncoercible freedom of choice, its actual and complete attainment cannot be held to be more than a probability at the most. Mr. Gibson's Monism is therefore (if he is to retain his doctrine of freedom) an ideal of faith to be realized concretely, with the possibility of disintegration always bound up in it. It is not an intrinsic or an inevitable Monism. It is this latter Monism which is incompatible with freedom and Pragmatism. Mr. Gibson's Monism is in itself a possibility; it cannot be more. It is impossible to take the guarantee seriously when it is asserted that Religious Idealism guarantees the ultimate triumph of good, but that this triumph 'must be wrought for, fought for, and won, and even when won must still be held.'<sup>1</sup> If the triumph of good is assured, it must come, whether man fights for it or not. If the fight is real and necessary, then the victory, however probable, is not and never can be absolutely guaranteed, and the Monism is a concrete possibility, probability, but not an intrinsic actuality. Such Monism is compatible with Pragmatism: it is

<sup>1</sup> *God With Us*, p. 207.

the goal for which its meliorism hopes ; if, on the other hand, it implies more than this, it involves the collapse of Religious Idealism as a philosophy of freedom and personality.

Despite, therefore, many affinities, the Idealism represented by Professor Eucken and Mr. Gibson differs from Pragmatism in the less radical attitude it adopts and its leaning towards a Monism which, upon its own principles, it is hard to substantiate. It is what Professor James would call a 'tender-minded' Monism, however, very different from the 'tough-minded' tendency of intellectual Absolutism. But, like all mediating philosophies, its balance is somewhat precarious. 'In Eucken's earlier writings the emphasis falls rather on Personalism and on immanence ; in his later work it falls on Absolutism and transcendence,' as Mr. Gibson confesses.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gibson and Professor Eucken assure us that it is really one and the same, but it is difficult to persuade oneself, especially in view of the reasons already cited, that antithetical tendencies can be bound for ever by such thin ties ; and the development of Professor Eucken's teaching in the hands of his pupils seems likely to see two contradictory lines of thought emerge, each claiming the right of succession.

At the same time it is possible sincerely to welcome much of the teaching of Professor Eucken's Idealism. Its value lies not so much in having afforded solutions of the great problem of life and religion, nor even in suggesting the way of solution, but rather in the original and stimulating insistence

<sup>1</sup> *God With Us*, p. 106.

upon the necessity of direct and concrete spiritual action as a factor in the making of philosophy, and the necessary reminder that all philosophy is life-philosophy, whether or not its postulates of freedom and personality are sustained. Their presence testifies to the ethical and religious influence that has gone to the construction of this scheme of thought; and even if its treatment of history is at times inclined to indulge in subjectivity, its sympathy and insight in historical criticism are not less valuable. It is impossible to study Professor Eucken without a direct inspiration for life and action, and none more than he has so directly rendered philosophy the instrument for building up the City of God amongst men.

## CHAPTER VIII

### PRAGMATISM AS A RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY

#### § 1. *The Personal Revolution*

NOTHING is more significant in, or characteristic of, modern religious philosophy than the centralization, one might almost say the discovery, of the fact of personality. Nothing is more strange than that personality, which might have been expected to appear as one of the earliest centre-points of philosophical thought, is only now, and still slowly, gaining due recognition. The revolution—it is hardly an exaggeration to say revolution—that is enthroning personality to-day is more significant than many think. It is the revolt of the Christian consciousness from the philosophical domination of Hellenism. Had the conception of personality ever laid hold of the Greek mind, it would have entered into its rights in European philosophy many centuries ago. Its absence witnesses to the permanence of Greek influence, its presence marks the emancipation from the restrictions of Hellenism which is being wrought by the awakening power of the moral and religious consciousness.

For to this rather than to purely speculative considerations the modern emphasis upon person-

ality is due. Much is owed to the courageous thinking of Lotze, but much more to ethical and religious convictions. Thinking philosophically, it is easily possible to fashion oneself as a phase of a non-moral Absolute. It is an interesting dialectical exercise. Thinking religiously, the conviction of independent personality is irresistible; thinking morally, nothing apart from the existence of free personal agents can make moral responsibility anything more than a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. The new breath that clothes dry bones with personality comes from the moral, religious, and volitional sides of our nature.

The result is the establishment of a new rallying-point in philosophy, especially in religious philosophy. Its centre is personality, human and divine; its radii run forth in several directions, and, though not without diversity of operation, each joins the other at the personal centre. One example has already been afforded in the life-philosophy of Professor Eucken. Personal Idealism, which will subsequently come under notice, is another, and one that owes much to Lotze; and that which is now to be considered is a method inspired by and linked most closely to the conception of personality.

Such a method is Pragmatism.<sup>1</sup> It is essentially personalistic, even individualistic; but it is based

<sup>1</sup> The nomenclature is still unsettled. Dr. Schiller uses the term 'Pragmatism' for the method, and 'Humanism' for the resultant philosophy. Professor James, after inclining to 'Radical Empiricism' and 'Pluralism,' seems willing now to adopt Dr. Schiller's designation (cf. *Meaning of Truth*, p. 53). 'Humanism' is, however, already upon

upon deeper foundations, both scientific and philosophical, than the meagre Individualism whose abortive revolt in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was lost in a fresh wave of Intellectualism. So strongly has Pragmatism reinforced the personal standpoint in philosophy that all recent personalistic philosophy, even whilst strictly maintaining its own routes, has some running powers over the lines of Pragmatism, not least the suggestions at the close of this survey, which outline the course of an empirically grounded religious philosophy. In view of this, therefore, an additional interest is lent to the present inquiry into the possibilities of Pragmatism as a religious philosophy.

## § 2. *Pragmatism as a Method*

Pragmatism is primarily a method. There is no ready-made and official pragmatist philosophy. As the method is employed, there will no doubt in time be formed, by the collation and comparison of results, an established body of belief which will command the assent of most pragmatists. But it is contrary to the whole spirit of Pragmatism to regard it as a formal philosophy which can be delivered, like other systems, with an authoritative sanction.

Pragmatism claims to be a common-sense method, the philosophic market in another significance, and the infringement of trademarks is confusing. Here, therefore, the term 'Pragmatism' (coined by Mr. C. S. Pierce in 1878), though not wholly satisfactory, is used generally for both method and result.

firstly because it takes the starting-point which is natural to every unsophisticated man, and to philosophers when they are off duty, viz. that of our immediate experience as it presents itself to our minds *en bloc*; and secondly, because it teaches that beliefs, philosophical and otherwise, are important only in their practical effects.

It is, however, somewhat of a caricature to assert, as is at times popularly stated, that this latter point is 'the meaning of Pragmatism.' Though Pragmatism emphasizes this, it is in truth too obvious to carry us far. Defined by Dr. Schiller, Pragmatism is 'The thorough recognition that the purposive character of mental life generally must influence and pervade also our most remotely cognitive activities.'<sup>1</sup> Pragmatism, therefore, is far from being untutored common sense dressed in the feathers of Minerva's owl. It is a new method of inquiry into the old problems of thought and being, a new attempt to value them.

It will not be necessary to enter into a detailed exposition of the pragmatic method, much less to reply to the many objections and misconceptions it has encountered.<sup>2</sup> It will be sufficient if it be illustrated by a brief reference to two examples, the pragmatist's treatment of the questions of truth and of reality. These will afford illustration of the

<sup>1</sup> *Humanism*, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> For answers to objections cf. James, *Meaning of Truth*, and Dr. Schiller in *Mind*, *passim*. For Pragmatism and truth generally, Schiller: *Humanism*, Lect. iii., and *Studies in Humanism*, Lects. v.-viii.; James, *Pragmatism*, Lect. vi., and *Meaning of Truth* generally.



pragmatic method at work, and reveal the complete recognition accorded by Pragmatism to the human standpoint, and also to the teleological aim of mental activity.

In contradiction to the assertions that our ideas are true in so far as they copy, agree with, or participate in absolute truth, the pragmatist contends that truth *happens* to an idea ; it is *made* true. There is, as Dr. Schiller well points out,<sup>1</sup> an ambiguity of truth. Every assertion claims to be truth, but since not all that claims truth is true, truth has a secondary sense, that of the proven and established claim. In other words truth means (1) Claim, (2) Validation. How, then, may the two be distinguished, and how does the first pass over into the second ? Professor James replies simply, ' True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate, and verify. False ideas are those that we cannot.'<sup>2</sup> Truth, then, so far from being a superhuman system, is humanly made.

How, then, is truth made ? The pragmatist replies that truth is a *valuation* of our experience.<sup>3</sup> All our experience is subject to this process, and we judge it as true or false, good or bad, pleasant or painful. If man were solitary, a Crusoe, with the world for his desert island, the matter would rest there ; but in social intercourse we are obliged to harmonize our own personal valuations with those of others. Hence they are subject to revision and restatement. Sometimes we may be so convinced

<sup>1</sup> *Studies in Humanism*, pp. 141-62.

<sup>2</sup> *Pragmatism*, p. 201.

<sup>3</sup> Schiller, *Humanism*, p. 54.

of our own valuation that we shall stand *Athanasius contra mundum*; sometimes we may withdraw our valuation altogether, and refuse to credit as true what once was believed by us to be true, because we find no one else will believe it. If a man persists in his subjective valuation when the weight of others' judgement is against him, he is considered eccentric; if he carry his persistence too far, society labels him mad and restrains him accordingly.

It must further be remembered that we inherit the accumulated and crystallized body of truth which has come down to us from previous generations, representing the tried and tested valuations of former times.<sup>1</sup> This, though subjective in origin, comes in this way to assume an objective aspect; but, from the pragmatic standpoint, objective truth is not superhuman or celestial truth which we try dimly to adumbrate, but the consolidated result of subjective valuations, which have undergone the process of social selecting and testing.

By what criterion, then, it may be asked, is selection made? Pragmatism replies, by the criterion of use. What works best in practical<sup>2</sup> use is true.<sup>3</sup> If alternative explanations of any fact of experience are offered, the one that will be selected as true will be found in the long run invariably to be that which fits in better with the

<sup>1</sup> Schiller, *Humanism*, p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> This word has been the centre of a storm of criticism. It should be stated that it is not so conceived as to exclude the theoretic interest. For the pragmatic meaning of 'practical,' cf. James, *The Meaning of Truth*, p. 206 seq.

<sup>3</sup> *Pragmatism*, p. 213 seq.

whole harmony of our experience, just as the Darwinian theory has superseded the theory of 'natural kinds' because of its greater usefulness and efficiency as an explanation of the facts. But when there is no possibility of the matter being decided in practice, there is no criterion by which to judge one better than another. The theory, then, which will connect new facts with truths previously accepted, and will at the same time best explain those facts, will be reckoned true. If there could be two or more explanations completely meeting the needs of the case, choice between them would be merely a matter of taste and temperament.

It follows, then, that not only is truth made, but truth is always being made.<sup>1</sup> It is essentially a case of the survival of the fittest. A new truth that is proposed, if it conflict with the generally accepted body of truth, will have to establish itself in the face of a vast opposition, and many new truths, in the first sense of claims to truth, fail to do so. On the other hand, new truths may succeed in gaining a foothold and revolutionizing the previous body of truth, as in the case of certain theories concerning the nature and properties of matter within comparatively recent times.

The critics of Pragmatism, including even Mr. Bradley, from whose doctrines Dr. Schiller's whole work is a rebellion, have, with an undue haste, concluded that the pragmatist's view of truth is that whatever is useful or pleasant is true. No sane pragmatist ever thought any such thing. A truth is true, not by being serviceable to one re-

<sup>1</sup> *Pragmatism*, p. 224.

quirement of life, but to life's whole harmony,<sup>1</sup> and in urging this the pragmatist would seem to adopt a more satisfactory course than those rationalists who desire only to satisfy the demands of logic. Moreover, as it has been seen, this harmony of life must be assessed not only in the light of our own valuations but of those of others. Pragmatism merely recognizes what Intellectualism is apt to forget—that the fullness of truth must satisfy our whole personality, feeling, will, and reason, not merely the sense of logical consistency, even if individual truths should conflict with these at times.

As a further example of the pragmatic method, equally important from the religious standpoint, the question of the nature of reality may be taken.\* As against the conception of a reality ready-made and somehow supposed to guarantee the realities of our experience, Pragmatism regards reality as still in the making, holding that *the making of truth is also the making of reality*.

It has been noted that Pragmatism takes as its starting-point man's experience as it seems to him to be, the whole rich plurality of our minds, our rational and emotional, our personal and social, our aesthetic, ethical, and religious experience. It does not desire to deal only with a desiccated residue of 'pure' thought, but treats of experience in its fullness. This is the 'primary reality,' the raw

<sup>1</sup> *Humanism*, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> Schiller, *Studies in Humanism*, Lects. viii., xix.; *Humanism*, Lect. vii. James, *Pragmatism*, pp. 212 seq., 244 seq.; *Pluralistic Universe*, p. 262 seq.

material before it is treated or dressed in any way. If our interests were purely cognitive we should stop here. If we were mere spectators we could watch contentedly any and every picture thrown on the screen. But our minds are interested and purposive, and according to those interests we operate on this primary reality. In a sense all our immediate experience—dreams, fancies, and hallucinations included—is ‘real’ to us. It is only when we begin to reflect upon it, to test it by the experiences of others and by the generally received reality, that we discriminate between what is appearance merely and what is real. But can our experimenting with reality in any sense be said to *make* it? is it not merely *discovering*? Solely on this ground, however: since discovering makes a difference to the discoverer, who is a part of reality, it makes a difference to reality. But even as regards the thing discovered we can be said to make reality, for our knowing is never mere knowing: all knowledge is a prelude to action, and the very act of breaking up the raw material of primary reality into human categories and arrangements is a contribution to reality; these very human interests impose the condition under which reality is revealed. To conceive of reality as apart from these is meaningless.

It will have been noticed that Pragmatism starts from man’s experience, but has not explained its origin. A beginning is needed. It cannot be said that any particular fact can be conceived as having been made by a previous cognitive operation without thereby postulating a basis for the latter also,

and so on in a continual regress. Dr. Schiller and Professor Dewey content themselves with noting this merely; indeed, the former at least, expressly says that, although this must be accepted as a limit to explanation, it need not be considered any obstacle to the methodological value of Pragmatism.<sup>1</sup> The mystery of the beginning of all things neither Pragmatism nor any philosophy explains. Every explanation must start somewhere, every structure that thought builds is founded on some postulate, whether it be theistic or materialistic, idealistic or empirical. It is evident, however, that simply as a method Pragmatism is entirely neutral, and other considerations, though these will be of a pragmatic nature, must decide whether it be said, 'In the beginning, matter,' or 'In the beginning, God.'

### § 3. *The Relation of Pragmatism to Religion*

The relation of Pragmatism to religion is a subject which has received an attention altogether inadequate to its importance, although it is evident that to the religious apologist Pragmatism offers many advantages. Despite the continual objections that are raised against the anthropic character of Pragmatism, it is useless to argue that anthropic means anti-religious. Anything more tremendously anthropic than the Christian doctrines of the Incarnation and Atonement it is scarcely possible to imagine. From this point of view the humanism of Pragmatism cannot be said to be unfavourable

<sup>1</sup> *Studies in Humanism*, p. 432-3.

to religion. Moreover, Pragmatism stands committed entirely to freedom, a satisfactory result for those who hold that Determinism stultifies both morality and the universe in which morality exists. Pragmatism also, for the sake of its root-principles, cannot disregard religion in general, one of the most potent influences of human life, nor the religious impulses, which are of almost universal range. Nor yet can anything that works well be regarded pragmatically as valueless, and the common-sense test of religion has always been that the religion is best which produces the best lives.

It is only fair to Pragmatism to recollect that this is not the sole justification for religion that it has to offer. The assumption is continually made in anti-pragmatic criticism that Pragmatism patronizes religion as a useful sanction of morality, a social convenience that works well, but does not and cannot in any wise deal with its truth or falsity. If this were so, it would be utterly unmeaning to speak of Pragmatism as a religious philosophy, and it becomes necessary, therefore, to ask how far it may be possible to find a philosophical basis for religion in Pragmatism. This is the more necessary since, in the absence of anything like a general pragmatic philosophy, Professor James, in his laudable desire for plainness of speech and open acknowledgement of all possible implications and consequences, has been terrifying the religiously orthodox with the word 'polytheism,'<sup>1</sup> and the philosophically orthodox with 'pluralism,' even stretching his candour to admit that Pragmatism is 'compatible with solips-

<sup>1</sup> *Pluralistic Universe*, p. 310.



ism,' though it has 'no special affinity' with it.<sup>1</sup> If Pragmatism is to gain a hearing much less a reception, it must endeavour to indicate not simply possible alternatives, but its probable course. It is possible to be too candid. Is there anything, therefore, in the general method of Pragmatism that renders it unfitted to afford a religious philosophy?

The pragmatic view of reality and truth is in no sense anti-religious. Though hostile to the pseudo-theological Absolute, which it not altogether groundlessly regards as one of the most undesirable aliens that ever landed on the shores of British thought, it does not necessitate the assumption that there is no higher mind than ours in the universe.<sup>2</sup>

Nor need there be anything contrary to religion in the frank recognition that truth is *in re*, which Pragmatism advances against abstract Intellectualism, and Absolutism has no right to pose as the friend of religion in these matters. In another direction, however, the pragmatic view of truth as made rather than ready-made has a significant bearing upon a question of no little importance to the present time—I refer to doctrinal standards. It is not necessary to dilate upon the strain of conscience and uneasiness of spirit manifested to-day with regard to some of the older dogmatic statements of religion. The pragmatic view of truth brings real assistance to these cases. Superseded doctrines are not falsehoods. In their own day they were true. With new generations new valuations arise, and old truths are thrown out of

<sup>1</sup> *Meaning of Truth*, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. James, *Pragmatism*, p. 299.

focus. Our own truths may in time suffer in the same way. But since 'true' and 'false' are not absolute terms, but relative to those human minds that entertain them, the flux rather than the immutability of truth does not puzzle us. Our doctrines may represent the best conception up-to-date, but development may give us better. Absolute truth for us lies ahead, when, here or hereafter, truth will be adequate for our every need: that is the ideal of truth for Pragmatism.<sup>1</sup>

Pragmatism also meets religious conceptions in its view of reality. For both this world is a real world, involving eternal issues for good or bad. It is an easy sneer to deride this doctrine by stating that it implies that God made the world so badly that for ever after He struggles with it to make it right. Yet the alternative is most unthinkable, for it reduces the world to a mere play, a puppet-show, with a predetermined conclusion. Better surely a world of uncertified possibilities, a real battle, than a guaranteed world and parade-at-arms! The world of Pragmatism is not insured against total loss; it is still in the making. As it is made so it will be, for salvation or damnation. Pragmatism leans to a melioristic view and hopes, but will not eviscerate life by removing from it real chances, real gains, and real losses. A radical libertarianism can draw no other conclusion.

It is impossible to deny that here Pragmatism meets the ordinary religious consciousness. The average man never doubts that his life contributes to reality, and believes the preacher who tells him

<sup>1</sup> Schiller, *Studies in Humanism*, p. 213.

that the world is made different for good or bad by the influence of every single life. It is only abstractionist philosophies which disembowel life and make this world like Homer's Hades, a vain show, where gibbering ghosts flit about in the twilight of appearance, the faint reflection of the far-off sunlight of the serene, eternal realm of reality and truth. For Pragmatism, as for the poet, life is real and earnest, involving real issues which are now working out for ultimate good or evil. It is not a phantom drama where reality is weakly represented with ill-painted scenery : it is the workshop where reality is made. The pragmatic view of reality and truth must greatly increase the seriousness of life ; its humanism, rightly interpreted, by enhancing the importance of the part played by man, adds to the earnestness of the appeal of religion.

Any pragmatic religious philosophy, it is further evident, must be based on religious experience. As merely a postulate of explanation, God is a conception of more philosophical than religious significance, a First Cause receding in the mists of past time. It is in spiritual experience that God becomes a reality. If, as Pragmatism urges, the real and the true are of meaning to us only in connexion with our human valuation of them, it follows that ■ spiritual experience is necessary to the religious apprehension of God. This is the conclusion of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Religious conceptions, then, are made as explanations of the primary fact of religious experience, just as truth and reality are involved by manipulation of sensible and cognitive experience generally. That this does

not render God the created not the creator of man need hardly be said. Pragmatism admits an objective 'core,' relation with which constitutes the process of making reality. In a similar way, whilst spiritual experience makes spiritual truth, there is a reality and truth which it does not make, but finds. A spiritual solipsism is even more unthinkable than a philosophical solipsism. At the same time one implication cannot be avoided. Since reality and truth are different because of the relation of human minds to them, can we look upon God as unaffected by our relation to Him? Though we generally think of the change in us wrought by God, it cannot be a case of one-sided action; there must be, in a real sense, change in God wrought by man.

It has, however, been acknowledged that as a method Pragmatism need not be religious, even though it may be made serviceable in the construction of a religious philosophy. There are materialistic and agnostic pragmatists. Like most revolutionaries fighting for life, Pragmatism is very tolerant and has many heterogeneous allies. But if the pragmatic method wins its place and issues in a definite philosophy, it must either be religious or anti-religious, or, as a third possibility, be capable of both explanations. Very little thought will make it evident that the last-named will probably be the case. With the possible exception of Materialism, every type of thought—Pantheism, Idealism, Empiricism, Monism—has appeared both in religious and non-religious aspects. The neutral method of Pragmatism suggests the extreme likelihood of a

similar issue. If this be so, however, the question is not closed, as it would be in the case of other philosophies, by the single consideration as to which interpretation has the better argument. Granted that Pragmatism may be fashioned into a religious or non-religious philosophy, it must still be asked which, *upon pragmatic principles*, must be preferred; and this is the question now to be faced.

The question may be regarded in a twofold manner, retrospectively and prospectively. Retrospectively it amounts to asking whether the primary postulate of Pragmatism is to be God or a substitute for God. Prospectively it inquires whether the pragmatic *Weltanschauung* must, on pragmatic principles, receive a religious interpretation.

As regards the former, Pragmatism, as it has been stated, postulates an original objective core of reality. One of the chief weaknesses of the development of Pragmatism hitherto has been neglect of this objective aspect. Dr. Schiller<sup>1</sup> admits a basis of 'original fact,' but sets it down as 'sheer claim,' and 'conceptual limits,' stating that ultimate reality looks forward, not backward. So long as Pragmatism is a method simply, this may be enough, but Pragmatism has had time to be more than a method and to show that it has borne results. As a philosophy Pragmatism must give more definite attention to this postulate. One of the most frequent criticisms of Pragmatism has been based upon the assumption that, when the Pragmatist says man makes truth, he means makes truth apart from reference to objective cognition—in short, makes

<sup>1</sup> *Studies in Humanism*, p. 432.

what he likes. The objection is of course absurd, but it would not have been made if more stress had been laid upon the given nature of original reality, the fixed character of the primary conditions. 'Objective' truth, in the sense of consolidated subjective truth, does not meet the criticism, since it too was subjectively made. It is necessary not only to note, but to deal definitely with the *regulative* power of the primary postulate.<sup>1</sup> A second purpose may also be served in the same manner. The humanism of Pragmatism has shown some signs of running riot, and it may well be time to check it by a fuller recognition of the limits set to man's creative power, even though those limits may be somewhat difficult to assess.

Concerning the nature of this primary postulate Professor James speaks unhesitatingly.<sup>2</sup> If matter were said to be a postulate equally sufficient with the postulate God, Pragmatism would be bound upon purely pragmatic principles to decide against it, since, besides meeting the needs of man for a responsiveness on the part of the universe, which Materialism cannot do, Theism affords a promise for the future, where Materialism ends all with the epitaph 'Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes.' It may therefore be reasonably concluded that retrospectively Pragmatism needs a religious and not merely a neutral interpretation.

But Pragmatism proclaims that it devotes itself

<sup>1</sup> Professor James affords the clearest statement yet made concerning the objective aspect of truth in *The Meaning of Truth*, ch. xii.

<sup>2</sup> *Pragmatism*, p. 96 seq.; *Meaning of Truth*, p. 189.

rather to consequents than to antecedents, and that first principles are less important than results. Viewed retrospectively the theistic postulate may be merely a barren Deism. The prospective aspect is the more important, and the question arises whether the issue as well as the postulate of Pragmatism is to be religious.

Pragmatism starts from experience as it is for the experient, and has no *a priori* veto upon religious experience. It is willing to allow it. In its own province it is allowed local government in security and peace under the pragmatic republic. But can the matter rest here? Pragmatism objects to 'pure' thought, insisting that thought is shot through with the volitional and emotional constituents of mind. Can religion be 'pure'—that is to say unpermeated and unpermeating? Surely religious experience must be pervasive in all experience, and cannot have a territory in the spiritual and moral, and be warned off as a trespasser from our aesthetic, rational, and volitional experience! It seems clear that Pragmatism must allow religious experience as a pervasive element in all experience, to be reckoned in that complex of the whole with which it deals.

To this no pragmatist is likely to raise objection, if the proviso be added—for such as experience it. Accepting the proviso, it must still be asked what are the consequences of admitting the validity of this experience. Pragmatism insists that each subjective valuation of experience must be compared and conjoined with the valuations of others. Now the claim of religious experience which has been



admitted as valid is that it is directly in touch with God, and has some revelation of God's will—in other words, of God's valuation of experience. It follows, therefore, that those who are able to assess life from the religious standpoint have a more complete valuation of existence than those who cannot.

Nor can the matter be left there. It might be contended that no valuation of experience is complete, and to lack the religious valuation is not more than to be deficient in any other, for example the aesthetic. This, however, is manifestly not so, for the idea of God is *ex hypothesi* the highest of ideas, and the valuation of God the highest of valuations. Once religious experience is admitted at all, it must be admitted as necessarily the highest valuation. To be deficient aesthetically is a minor incompleteness, to be deficient religiously is to be radically incomplete.

It is impossible to avoid this admission by disparaging the religious estimation of experience. For Pragmatism a belief is defined as that which is acted upon, and the justification of any belief is found in its working harmoniously in its relations with the scheme of our total experience. A factor of such extent, influence, and importance as religion has been and is in the making of life, even on these grounds alone, must be most fully respected and acknowledged by every pragmatist. Nor can the claim of religion to be in touch with God's will—that is to say, God's valuation of experience—be regarded pragmatically as anything but well-founded. Once admit the existence of God, either as a given fact in religious experience or as an

inference,<sup>1</sup> and it follows that we either can or cannot know anything of His valuation of experience. If we can, we must consider His valuation in the estimation of experience that we ourselves make, even as we consider the valuations of others. If we cannot, we are led to the contradiction that, whilst we can know the valuation of other beings, that of the Highest Being is inaccessible, and therefore pragmatically speaking worthless. Pragmatism will not allow the possibility of the existence of any totally uninfluential conception, and if it admits the existence of God—a fact which is not denied—it must couple with the admission the further acknowledgement that religion could not continue in being unless it afforded a real knowledge of God which *qua* knowledge of the Highest Being, God, must have the most influential consequences upon the estimation of life.

The necessity for the recognition of the truth concerning God that is conveyed in religious experience is forced upon Pragmatism, also, from another side. For Pragmatism, truth has no meaning apart from its context; that is to say, the experiences in which it reveals and fulfils itself; and these experiences are human experiences. The choice of three consequences here presents itself. It may be said that, since all truth is humanly presented, humanity is the universe. This has, however, already been rejected as unpragmatic. It would be a repetition of solipsism, with the single

<sup>1</sup> The inference need not be God in the theistic sense, but Pragmatism, in rejecting the Absolute, can scarcely arrive at any other conclusion.

difference that the solipsistic subject is humanity, not a single individual. In the second place, it may be contended that Pragmatism here supports Positivism, and abandons all idea of anything but human relative truth. This course is expressly repudiated by Professor James, who urges that 'the answer which Pragmatism offers is intended to cover the most complete truth that can be conceived of—"absolute" truth if you like—as well as truth of the most relative and imperfect description.'<sup>1</sup> The third choice seems, therefore, the only one possible to Pragmatism. Since human minds do not constitute the universe, and since Pragmatism will hold no compact with Positivism in being sceptical about the possibility of anything but human truth being known, it must admit that divine truth exists and may be known. The only way in which, on the principles of Pragmatism, such knowledge of God can be attained is in religious experience; so that in this way also the same conclusion is reached that the religious estimation is essential.

If this be so, even those who claim no religious experience themselves must assess their own experience side by side with, and in consideration of, those who do, admitting that, apart from the religious point of view, a complete valuation of experience—that is to say, a complete pragmatic philosophy—cannot be attained. The pragmatist's ideal of truth, already defined as the truth adequate for every purpose, cannot be reached apart from religious truth, given in the deliverances of the religious

<sup>1</sup> *Meaning of Truth*, p. 183.

consciousness. The conclusion is necessary that a complete pragmatic philosophy must be a religious philosophy.

From this point of view it is possible to appreciate and to answer the not unsympathetic criticism of Dr. Whately,<sup>1</sup> who thinks that religious truth must 'embrace reality at its widest circumference, and touch the life of the individual at its innermost heart and centre.' Such truth is perfectly concrete and not a postulate, but it introduces absoluteness into the general world of thought. As he considers Pragmatism to be a philosophy of probabilities he does not see how it could assimilate this, yet, seeing it admits religious knowledge and cannot separate religious from ordinary knowledge, this religious synthesis may arise and displace Pragmatism.

Dr. Whately seems to overlook the pragmatist ideal of absolute truth. The truth he indicates would fulfil, not destroy the pragmatic method; it would be the absolute or completed truth. Of course, if such truth is regarded as existing antecedently complete, Pragmatism can know nothing of it; but if it is the synthesis up to which religion is striving, it is the pragmatic ideal, and Dr. Whately's words are a fresh expression of the truth that the last word is with religion.

Indeed, I would venture to predict that ultimately it will become recognized that every philosophy, pragmatic or not, is only completely expressed as a religious philosophy. As Professor Eucken so insistently declares, all philosophy is philosophy of life, and philosophy of life means philosophy of religion.

<sup>1</sup> *The Inner Light*, pp. 23-6.

On the principles of Pragmatism it is possible more easily than it is otherwise to demonstrate this. Pragmatism admits the religious valuation of experience ; once admitted, it sweeps away the proviso 'for those who experience it' by asserting itself to be, if true at all, the highest and most complete expression of truth. It cannot force those who do not experience it into personal acceptance of religion upon these grounds—full toleration must be allowed to non-religious Pragmatism—but it certainly has good reason to assert that pragmatically the most justifiable Pragmatism is that which is religiously interpreted. It may well be that much of the prejudice that philosophy has often shown towards religion comes from a half-realized sense of the fact that to concede the truth of religion is not to gain a servant or tolerate an equal, but to obtain a master. Be that as it may, it would appear that the best expression of a pragmatic philosophy is yet to be afforded, and it is much to be hoped that some of the young and enthusiastic band who are proclaiming the gospel according to Pragmatism will fully redeem the implications of pragmatic philosophy by the construction of a pragmatic philosophy of religion.

## CHAPTER IX

### PERSONAL IDEALISM

#### § 1. *Idealism and the Independence of Personality*

THE controversy which has been excited by the recent development of the personalistic philosophies of Pragmatism and Personal Idealism has been the means of manifesting not a little carelessness of thought on the part of some of the foremost Hot-spurs of the dispute. The two terms have been frequently employed as synonyms for reasons neither logically nor practically justified. Some Personal Idealists are pragmatists, and all Pragmatism is personalistic, but none the less its method is by no means pledged to Idealism, and a Personal Idealist may be a conscientious anti-pragmatist. The common link between Pragmatism, Personal Idealism, and the views which are subsequently suggested by a survey of religious experience is the belief in the cardinal importance of the independence of personality.

In so far as Personal Idealism follows the common course of Idealistic philosophy it will not be necessary to trace it here. What is of interest is its differentiation from ordinary Idealism. It grafts upon the Idealism of Berkeley—or perhaps it should

be said upon a Neo-Berkeleianism—a strong sense of the independence of personality which is asserting itself in so many of the latest movements of thought. It represents the Idealism of Berkeley and the Personalism of Lotze combined and modified. It is constructed with polemic reference to Naturalism on the one hand, urging against it an explanation of the universe erected on an entirely different foundation; and against Absolutism on the other, sharing with the latter a common foundation, but developing a wholly different superstructure. The religious aspect of this type of thought finds its best expression in the work of Dr. Hastings Rashdall, who may be taken for the present purpose as its representative.

Dr. Rashdall<sup>1</sup> adopts the usual Idealist position, stating it with conciseness and brevity. He attempts to demonstrate the existence of God as a necessity of thought in the following manner. Though nothing really exists but mind, science reveals a world which existed prior to any human mind; it must, therefore, have been present to another mind: 'We must say that the fiery mass of the pre-animal solar system existed always in a Universal Mind, and that in his Mind there exists to-day whatever stars the astronomer's telescope has not yet sighted. Such a universal mind it is that we mean when we speak of God. The existence of God is thus shown to be an absolute necessity of thought.'<sup>2</sup>

The next step is an analysis of the idea of causality, which reveals two elements: the idea of force or

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Philosophy and Religion*, Lects. i., ii.

<sup>2</sup> *Contentio Veritatis*, p. 21.



power, and the idea of final cause. It is accordingly stated that God, the Universal Mind, not merely thinks but wills the objects of His thought. From the conception of will he passes to that of personality. A person is defined as 'a conscious, permanent, self-distinguishing, individual, active being.'<sup>1</sup> It is admitted that no hard-and-fast line can be drawn to mark the beginning of personality, since it is a matter of degree rather than of absoluteness; but it is maintained, with Lotze, that the requirements of personality are not fulfilled by human personality, but rather by divine.

With the doctrine of personality and the relation of divine and human personalities, the distinctive-ness and interest of the Personal Idealist position develops. Hitherto it has followed the line of most modern Idealism, with special indebtedness to Professor Ward's brilliant study *Naturalism and Agnosticism*. With the development of the personalistic standpoint it diverges from absolute and what may contradictorily, but not wholly inaptly, be called semi-absolute Idealism, and takes up its own position. Dr. Rashdall proceeds to elaborate its implications in a discussion of the relation of the personality of God to other personalities. The hypothesis of Pluralism, of independent and un-originated souls, is declined—rather, however, as gratuitous than as impossible. It fails to account for the unity of the world, and that community of minds which is not less evident than their distinctness. Further, the bodily organism upon which the soul is dependent is due to God—a fact which

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Idealism*, p. 372.

suggests a like dependence of the spirit. Lastly, the contrast between the limited knowledge of spirits and the 'inferred omniscience' of God prepares, by analogy, for the conclusion that the one mind is eternal and unoriginated, the others originated and dependent.

But radical Monism, no less than radical Pluralism, is to be avoided. In a most vigorous passage Dr. Rashdall points out the essential inwardness of being-for-self, stating that disregard of this is the *proteron pseudos* of Monism. Its 'fallacy is the assumption that what constitutes existence for others is the same as what constitutes existence for self. A *thing* is as it is known; its *esse* is to be known; what it is for the experience of spirits is its whole reality; it is that and nothing more. But the *esse* of a person is to know himself to be for himself, to feel and think for himself, to act on his knowledge and to know that he acts. . . . All the fallacies of our anti-individualist thinkers come from talking as though the essence of a person lay in what can be known about him, and not in his own knowledge, his own experience of himself.'<sup>1</sup> This insistence on the irrefragable reality and distinctness of self repudiates entirely the monistic idea of spirits as existing only in the knowledge God, or the Absolute, has of them. In having a being which is not the same as God's knowledge of it each spirit is, in this sense, independent even of God. The relation of God to spirits is accordingly conceived after the manner of the relation of one

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Idealism*, p. 383. The whole passage should be read.

spirit to another, saving that God has a knowledge vastly greater, deeper, and more comprehensive, and is of course the cause and ground of all.

The result is therefore the conception of a republic of spirits created by God, but none the less distinct from Him. The existence of spirits as an 'other' to God carries with it technically God's finiteness. At the same time it should be remembered that the limitation is merely technical. 'Everything that is real is in that sense finite.' The limitation, moreover, is a self-limitation, caused by the deliberate creation by God of an 'other' to Himself. Still further, it is not a self-limitation arbitrarily made, but one that is imposed by a nature which always wills what is best.

The position is summed up as follows: 'Neither Monism, in the pantheizing sense of the word, nor Pluralism; the world is neither a single Being nor many co-ordinate and independent Beings, but one Mind who gives rise to many.'<sup>1</sup> The conclusion accordingly is that God is not the Absolute, or the Absolute God. Their identity is an unfounded assumption. The Absolute is 'a Society'—God *and* souls, and as such constitutes the whole of reality.

Before passing on to consider the religious philosophy implied in this standpoint it seems necessary to add a word concerning a somewhat unfair attempt to saddle Personal Idealism with Solipsism,<sup>2</sup> which, if it were well-founded, would obviate the

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Idealism*, p. 391.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Watson, *Philosophical Basis of Religion*, p. 108 seq. Dr. Rashdall has replied in *Mind*, Jan. 1909, N.S., No. 69.

necessity of further discussion. It is argued that Personal Idealism allows only of the existence of ideas in individual minds, and nothing else. Consequently each individual is confined to that, and has no grounds for assuming either other minds or a Supreme Mind. Still further, since these ideas are all he knows, and he knows nothing besides, he cannot properly know them as his own, since self is only to be defined by its relation to other-than-self.

The criticism is a misstatement in more than one way. Personal Idealism does not assert or imply that the mind is restricted to its own ideas. The answer may be gained from what may seem an unpromising source for the Personal Idealist, Mr. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*,<sup>1</sup> where the process by which the existence of other selves is inferred is admirably analysed. The suggestion, however, appears to be that Personal Idealism cannot avail itself of the inference because it does not employ the expedient of a tissue of universal self, or Absolute, to weld all selves together. But the assumption of a universal self does not help one whit to join one self *in knowledge of* other selves, and that is the problem here. If Personal Idealism is solipsistic, all Idealism is.

As a matter of fact, however, the existence of a not-self is a primary and unescapable conviction. The inference that the not-self is likewise mind is the only one open to the Idealist. Dismissing the idea of a material not-self, he explains it by analogy with his own self. The only alternative is the pure

<sup>1</sup> Ch. xxi., *Solipsism*.

scepticism which declares that ultimate reality is utterly unlike anything we can know. Personal and Absolute Idealist stand here upon the same ground. Both have as much or as little right to claim knowledge of other selves, and, since the claim has never been successfully impeached, the right must be regarded as much, not little.

§ 2. *Personal Idealism as a Religious Philosophy.*  
*The Metaphysical and the Psychological Starting-points*

The Personal Idealist position is such as to leave abundant scope for the construction of a religious philosophy. In fact, the influence of moral and religious considerations has evidently been a more potent factor than the influence of philosophical considerations in shaping its scheme. It is a retort against Pantheism; and every Monism which does not allow true independence to human souls, whether it is technically called Pantheism or not, possesses the radical defects of Pantheism. The history of philosophy has shown how hardly they that be Monists enter the kingdom of freedom and personality. Personal Idealism is a Monism modified, and modified by religious considerations. Personal Idealism stops at one of those absolute alternatives which no amount of dialectical ingenuity can bridge: either the theoretical *everywhereness* and *in-every-thingness* of God, or the practical solution of the problem of evil; either a God in some sense limited, or an unlimited good-evil Absolute, a God-Devil, Devil-God; either philosophical symmetry

or moral necessity. The dilemma has never been dissolved. Personal Idealism sides with the moral rather than the philosophical demand, following the more imperative instinct, and in so doing offers itself as eminently a religious philosophy.

It is strongly objected against Personal Idealism that it gives a 'finite' God. The force of the objection, however, is largely sentimental. The term 'infinite' is sanctioned by piety and philosophy alike, but what does it convey? Strictly and literally interpreted as the negation of the finite it is meaningless. It is consequently more generally used to convey the sense inclusive of, yet over and above the finite, immanent plus transcendent. This is the 'over-finite' rather than the 'infinite'; but, if pressed, it must yield pure Pantheism. The mere addition of transcendence to immanence does not avoid Pantheism. Any philosophy in which God is not in some sense finite is pantheistic. Personal Idealism does not give 'finite' the same connotation for God and man alike. A strictly finite God and a strictly infinite God are both impossible conceptions. What is really needed is some synthesis of the terms 'finite,' 'infinite' which would combine and convey the truth for which each stands. Such a synthesis would meet Personal Idealism in theory, and most other philosophy in practice, for those who hold most rigidly to the theoretical unlimitedness of God invariably more or less utilize some device for limiting it in actual cases. It is hardly possible, therefore, to justify the undue repugnance that has been expressed towards the frank attempt of Personal Idealism to provide for this in theory.



The agreement between Personal Idealism and a philosophy of religious experience, so far as the questions of personality, human and divine, and freedom are concerned is harmonious, but notwithstanding the differences are substantial. Dr. Rashdall expressly repudiates the psychological basis, admitting no immediate knowledge of God, but substituting knowledge by inference, and further endeavours to show that the existence of God is a necessity of thought. It will anticipate some part of the task of a philosophy of religious experience psychologically and historically treated, and at the same time differentiate it from Personal Idealism, if Dr. Rashdall's objections to a psychological basis are considered.

He objects <sup>1</sup> to this method, in the first place, because psychology cannot tell whether the beliefs it considers are true or false. In one sense this may be so, but the objection can only have point if it is proposed to confine the whole issue to considerations raised by psychology alone. Such is not the case. To start from psychological fact does not prohibit the justification of what psychology yields by other considerations, or even the subsequent employment of a metaphysic, or something like one. For example, Dr. Rashdall's own method is metaphysical; but upon what is it based? If it is not based upon scientific fact, it at least depends partly upon it—witness the essential argument for the existence of a Divine Mind based upon scientific evidence of the existence of matter prior to human minds. Whence, then, the objection to starting from

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy and Religion*, p. 111.



psychological fact in a philosophy of religion? Dr. Rashdall is speaking of 'the idea of a religion which is merely based upon psychology and involves nothing else.' For such an idea no brief is held here; but is the alternative, as he seems to think, psychological basis and no metaphysic, or metaphysical basis and no psychology? Surely it is possible to start from psychology and to involve metaphysics!

It may, however, be asked, Why trouble about psychology? Why not start direct from a metaphysical inference? The answer, I take it, is primarily because religion, as an historical fact, never has started from an inference, but always from an immediate experience. A purely theoretical basis for religion may be afforded metaphysically, but that is to abstract religion from its concrete form—a method, to my mind, radically vicious, and involving all the repeated errors of Intellectualism and Abstractionism. The religion of metaphysical reasoning is a thing altogether different from the religion of life, religion as it has been and is—a power in the making of life. A purely metaphysical argument never comes within measurable distance of concrete religion.

Dr. Rashdall's mistrust of psychology, however, goes further. Religious experience seems to carry with it the assurance of the existence of the Being it reveals, but 'the belief is not really immediate; it is an inference from what is actually matter of experience.'<sup>1</sup> It is, however, just that 'matter of experience' that psychology investigates primarily as a psychological fact, not necessarily as an im-

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy and Religion*, p. 112.

mediate intuition of God. Whether knowledge of God is given in that experience or inferred from it must be considered later. At present it may be granted, for the sake of argument, that it is inferred; none the less, it is an inference almost universally made, wellnigh irresistible, and based on a warm personal conviction. Dr. Rashdall's inference is based on an ingenious metaphysical argument. Which is the more certain? If both should be inferences, their character is widely different.

Dr. Rashdall also objects that the experience does not guarantee the truth of the theory connected with it. It is not necessary that it should. The experience guarantees its own reality, the theory must justify itself. If a theory more adequate can be found, so much the better. To base religion upon psychology, however, does not necessitate, as Dr. Rashdall seems to think, that the experience should be interpreted as yielding any one invariable result, not even an immediate intuition of God.

'When the intellectual theory alters,' continues Dr. Rashdall, 'the same kind of experience is no longer possible.' If I think I see a ghost, and my friend persuades me it is nothing of the kind, he alters my explanation, but the psychological fact of the vision remains, and under changed circumstances, apart, shall it be said, from my friend's sceptical influence, it is possible to revert to the former explanation. But, granting that intellectual doubt can do more, can make the soul so cold that it no longer hears the voice within, is the experience because it is silenced destroyed, not only for the future but for the past? Is the experience, as it

was experienced, cancelled? Surely not. Mind is dependent on bodily powers for its expression. Paralysis may destroy those powers; but Dr. Rashdall, as an Idealist, does not hold that the mind itself is thereby eternally destroyed. If the theory that expresses religious experience becomes paralysed, is the fact of religious experience thereby eternally destroyed? Moreover, when to the basis in psychology is added the testimony of history, the fact is revealed that religious experience in man generally still holds its own after centuries of intellectual objections, and repeated changes in intellectual theory—a striking testimony to its persistence, extent, and reality. Changes in individual cases do not affect the witness of the whole.

The next objection, that others are not convinced,<sup>1</sup> is of no weight. No method of basing religion carries universal conviction, least of all by metaphysical inference, which is notoriously insecure. As a matter of fact, far more have been and are convinced by personal testimony than by any reasoning process. Moreover, the metaphysician is really more damaged by this objection than the psychologist. He can only explain his failure to convince by the somewhat desperate expedient of disparaging the rational understanding of the unbeliever; the psychologist expects the incredulity of the non-experient, and is by no means thereby disturbed in his own conviction.

‘The character of the religious experience (though there may be certain common elements in it) varies very widely with the character of the theoretical

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy and Religion*, p. 113.

belief with which it is associated. . . . The Buddhist's religious experiences are not possible for those who hold the Christian's view of the universe.'<sup>1</sup> Again, it is possible to agree with the statement and decline the conclusion. The common element is all that psychology needs. It requires not particular beliefs, either Christian or Buddhist, but the broad general fact; and that some such common element there must be is vouchsafed by the fact that the experience of both Christian and Buddhist are alike to be described as *religious* experience.

In a former section<sup>2</sup> dealing with the intuitive knowledge of God, Dr. Rashdall has contended that not every one is a Theist. Of course, the philosophy of religious experience does not profess to discover latent Theism in all religious experience: it arrives at Theism as ultimately the completed explanation, not the condition of that experience. But Dr. Rashdall continues to assert that anything less than Theism—for example, the common residual element extracted by Professor James's 'rather painful work'—is so vague as to be almost valueless. It is, however, evident that the significance of Professor James's work does not lie only in the common elements which are finally extracted from his analysis. The real value of the analysis is in the emphasis it has given by appeal to history, and still more to psychology, to the fact that man is inveterately religious, and that this almost universal experience of religion has been most potent, ethically, socially, and in many other ways, in uplifting man and building up the race. Such a

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy and Religion*, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 106.

fact can legitimately be utilized as a basis for a religious philosophy. This philosophy will inquire what interpretation must be placed upon this fact, and in so doing will sift out the impurities, the reactions, the errors, and endeavour to place it in its purest and clearest significance. Such a result must then be harmonized with all else that philosophy has to say of man and the universe. That may ultimately involve a metaphysic, but the starting-point still remains concrete religious experience, as psychological and historical.

The objections that arise from individual aberrations can accordingly be disregarded. If some claim as intuitive what is acquired,<sup>1</sup> the claim can be unmasked. That some who are religious do not claim intuitive knowledge of God, as Dr. Rashdall also objects,<sup>2</sup> matters nothing. Even those who base the security of the knowledge of God in philosophy have a personal religious experience apart from that. By starting from the concrete experience of religion, religious philosophy keeps in touch with religion and life; by starting with metaphysical inference it is divorced from these, and has the additional task of linking them to the abstract explanation it proffers. The one is purely a philosophy of religion, the other primarily a religiously interpreted philosophy.

As regards Dr. Rashdall's own method, the history of philosophy cannot be said to promise favourably towards an attempt to reveal the existence of God as a necessity of thought. So long as philosophical schemes of Naturalism and

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy and Religion*, p. 109.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 108.

Agnosticism prevail, it can hardly be stated to be a necessity, for, by the *solvitur ambulando* process, many minds are shown to have dispensed with it. From the Idealist standpoint a Universal Mind may be very strongly supported ; but that this is God, in the theistic sense, is a matter of contention, repudiated by many idealists. Is Dr. Rashdall therefore in a stronger position than the psychological philosophers ? He adopts an inference which may or may not be made,<sup>1</sup> and interprets it theistically. They take a psychological fact, the fact of religion, which is indisputable, and explain it theistically also. In what way is Dr. Rashdall's method the more secure ?

Dr. Rashdall rejects the possibility of immediate knowledge of God. It has already been stated that the psychological method is not bound to this conclusion, though, since an immediate knowledge of self, or at least an immediate self-feeling or sense of being-for-self, is assumed by the Personal Idealist, it is difficult to see any *a priori* objection to an immediate God-feeling. Mediate knowledge is, it is claimed, not less certain than immediate. My knowledge of my friend's existence is an inference, and yet indisputable ; why should the inference of God be less certain ? It is obvious, however, that, as a matter of fact, the latter inference is less certain, and far more disputable. Admitting, however, without prejudice, for the sake of argument, that the metaphysical inference of God may be

<sup>1</sup> For a criticism of this inference which disallows it altogether cf. McTaggart, *Some Dogmas of Religion*, p. 250 seq.



certain, it is none the less an abstract after-thought which it may fairly be claimed would never have been drawn apart from the sense of God in the religious experience of mankind. It is an attempt to justify in philosophy what is first of all realized in experience. Essentially, therefore, it is of a secondary character. This consideration, in itself, should be sufficient to give preference to the method which starts from the primary consideration rather than to that which starts from the secondary. All that Personal Idealism can afford may be thus empirically reached, but Personal Idealism, starting from a secondary consideration, moves on a different plane from the experience for which it affords justification.

Possibly, if Dr. Rashdall is assured that to base religious philosophy upon psychology does not necessarily imply that *knowledge* of God is intuitional, but rather an immediate experience from which definite knowledge is inferred, a closer measure of agreement may be attained. He recognizes<sup>1</sup> different methods of God-conviction—emotional, metaphysical, ethical; but contends that in every case the interpretation proceeds by inference. The truth of the matter is that it is extremely difficult to distinguish between intuition and inference. Elsewhere Dr. Rashdall states that ‘the ultimate moral judgements, no doubt, must be intuitive or immediate, but in our deductions from them—in their application both to practical life and to theories about God and the universe—there is room for much intellectual work.’<sup>2</sup> It seems to me that

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy and Religion*, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 143.



the words might equally be applied to religious experience. Its presentation is immediate. The idea of God is, however, a deep-rooted conception connected with the whole of our experience. It is almost impossible for introspection to decide how far the conception of God, as otherwise attained, influences the interpretation or expression of religious experience. Intuitions are subjective, and if any one claims to have an immediate revelation of God, who is to say with any certainty whether the revelation is purely immediate in its expression or whether inference has been unconsciously at work? Not even the experient himself probably. It is certain, however, that some inferential reflection must take place, even in the most self-revealing intuition. Some words of Martineau, already quoted, may be repeated in this connexion. 'I care not whether this is to be called an *immediate vision* of God in the experiences of conscience or whether it is to be taken as an *inference* drawn from the data they supply. It is the truth contained in them.'<sup>1</sup> Psychology can afford to take the same attitude, since in either case the same conclusions can be drawn.

It is possible, therefore, to welcome the corroboration of results which Personal Idealism offers to a more empirically inclined religious philosophy whilst declining its method. The differences are almost wholly methodological, and are therefore subordinate to the large agreement in result.

<sup>1</sup> *Study of Religion*, vol.ii. p. 28. Dr. Rashdall (*Philosophy and Religion*, p. 108) regards Martineau as a non-intuitionist. In the light of the above, this is hardly correct.

Personal Idealism, moreover, has an advantage which the psychological method does not claim. It meets the Absolutists on grounds they may recognize with an alternative explanation. To the metaphysically minded this course will always commend itself, rather than that here adopted; and, as they are a permanent and influential order in philosophy, it is well that for them, and after their own manner, a way of escape is suggested from the paralysing grip of the common enemy, Absolutism.

PART II

THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN EMPIRICAL  
RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY



CHAPTER I  
ITS GROUNDWORK IN THE SCIENCE  
OF RELIGION  
(A) PSYCHOLOGY

§ 1. *The Psychological Method*

FEW differences between ancient and modern philosophy are more striking than that which is caused by the relation of modern philosophy to science. Philosophy grew to maturity far more rapidly than science, and whilst Greek philosophy was not conducted wholly apart from the science of the time, from the nature of the case it could not be greatly influenced by it. At the present time science has, with an astonishing rapidity, advanced its growth, with the result that modern philosophy has experienced a change in outlook and conceptions, due to the fresh views and new modes of thought that science has introduced. In a similar manner it is possible for modern religious philosophy to find new sources in the science of religion. By its investigation of the psychology of individual expressions of religion, and its study of the historical development of religious phenomena, the science of religion has provided a firm foundation for an empirical religious philosophy, and to this ground-

work attention must first be directed in any attempt to suggest the course such a philosophy may take.

The science of religion is of comparatively recent growth in both its branches. The field of religious psychology has engaged fewer tillers than that of the history of religion, and cannot be said at present to have received an amount of attention commensurate with its value, importance, or interest. Happily there is now at least one notable exception to this general neglect, and in the investigations of Professor William James, embodied in a work that is likely to become classical, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, a brilliant illustration of the psychological method in religious philosophy is afforded. Apart from this the literature of the subject is neither large nor systematic. One of the best-known exponents of the method is the late Auguste Sabatier, from whose point of view 'psychology and history are the two nursing mothers of religious philosophy.'<sup>1</sup> In his *Esquisse d'une Philosophie de la Religion* he adopts a psychological standpoint. He appeals to his own consciousness. 'Why am I religious? Because I cannot help it; it is a moral necessity of my being. . . . Humanity is not less incurably religious than I am.'<sup>2</sup> Within psychological consciousness he discovers an initial contradiction between sensation and will, the passive and active sides of life. Following this antinomy up the scale, the same contradiction appears between man's desires and attainments, what he

<sup>1</sup> *Religions of Authority*, &c., p. xv.

<sup>2</sup> *Esquisse*, &c., Eng. trans., *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion based on Psychology*, p. 3.

approves and what he does. From this sense of contradiction religion springs. Its solution is not theoretical but practical. It gives a faith in life and in the origin and aim of life; it yields what Sabatier calls *un élan de la vie*, which rests upon the sense of dependence upon the Author of our being. 'This feeling of our subordination thus furnishes the experimental and indestructible basis of the idea of God.'<sup>1</sup> Religion is accordingly viewed as immortal. Both philosophic thought and the contradictions of experience strengthen it. 'It is a commerce, a conscious and willed relation into which the soul in distress enters with the mysterious power on which it feels that it and its destiny depend. This commerce with God is realized by prayer. Prayer is religion in act—that is to say, real religion.'<sup>2</sup> This definition is said to complete that of Schleiermacher by revealing religion as a free act as well as a feeling of dependence.

Amongst others, Professor G. T. Ladd, whose contribution to the philosophy of religion deserves more notice than it has obtained in this country, though he has many affinities with Intellectualism, co-ordinates psychology, anthropology, and comparative history as the bases of religious philosophy, giving primacy to the first, since 'the necessity for the constant use of the psychological method arises from the very nature of religion.'<sup>3</sup> A useful piece of experimental research work is to be found in Dr. E. D. Starbuck's *Psychology of Religion*. It is

<sup>1</sup> *Esquisse, &c.*, Eng. trans., *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion based on Psychology*, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> *Philosophy of Religion*, vol. i. p. 19.



confined to the study of the growth of the religious consciousness, which is examined under the division of conversion and lines of religious growth not involving conversion. A large number of actual cases are tabulated, but, since they are derived from circulars issued almost wholly to American Protestants, the survey is naturally somewhat restricted. Frequent articles in the various reviews upon the theory and practice of religious psychology testify also that interest in this standpoint is greater than is outwardly apparent, and that the subject is wider than its literature would suggest.<sup>1</sup>

The psychological method is distinguished by its starting-point. It accepts religious experience as a psychological fact, and seeks to interpret it. It attempts to organize and analyse the data of the religious consciousness from the scientific point of view. If it be truly scientific it has neither conservative nor destructive bias, and maintains a strict independence both of theory and theology. It is an empirical treatment of facts. In both the strength and the limitations of empiricism, therefore, does it share. Its strength lies in its directness and naturalness, its accessibility to critical investigation, and its scientific character. It is necessary that as wide and varied material as can be obtained should be taken into consideration; but, however great its range, it will still appear to many to lack universality.

<sup>1</sup> Boutroux's *Science and Religion in Contemporary Philosophy*, Pratt's *Psychology of Religious Belief*, and Galloway's *Principles of Religious Development* are valuable and interesting illustrations of the tendency to give fuller attention to psychology.

Theoretical universality is always more tempting than mere enumerative induction. History constantly reveals the fascinations of *a priori* methods. The justification of the less ambitious attempts of empirical religious psychology is, however, to be found in the successive breakdown of one after another of the *a priori* systems. What these systems attempt, religious psychology does not profess to do. None the less, it claims the attention of religious philosophy to its results, urging that they at least offer new and valuable data for its use, and looking to it to supplement in some measure their limitations.

Whilst the alleged lack of universality need not be held to be an objection to the use of the psychological method, its restrictions in other directions must be allowed for. It depends upon the testimony of the introspection of many who are not trained to think clearly, or to express precisely their experience. Many statements made in good faith as representations of religious experience must be accepted with caution and reserve. The accounts that are offered of a matter so closely bound up as is religion with the emotional states often suffer unconscious misrepresentation when the feeling has cooled and is regarded detachedly afterwards. That which is most strongly felt is seldom most clearly told. Moreover, in selecting words, the common property of all, to convey a unique personal experience, some of the immediacy and uniqueness that characterize it is necessarily lost. Considerable critical and discriminating power is required, therefore, lest the psychologist go astray with his material. None the less, these drawbacks do not

annul the value of the method. The first-hand character of the evidence, the ring of reality which sounds in it, compensate for all. Moreover, for the essentials of a religious philosophy, the broadest and most general results of psychological investigation will suffice. For the rest, some correction of individual aberrancies can be effected by covering a wide ground of investigation, and more still by careful philosophical criticism. The application of the psychological method must now engage attention, and it will best be illustrated by especial reference to Professor James, whose achievements in psychology, not less than his interest in the practical application of that science, enable him to speak with an authority that is recognized even by those entirely opposed both to his method and results.

§ 2. *Professor James's Treatment of Religious Experience*

Professor James applies himself to his task in a thoroughly empirical manner. The stones from which a religious philosophy is built must be hewn from the quarries of religious experience. By the logical method of collecting and sorting instances it may be possible to trace out, from the abundant material that is available, certain conclusions which shall have a measure of general validity, some facts to which all the creeds bear witness. With that end in view Professor James starts to wade breast-deep through the comprehensive collection of documents the review of which forms the major part of his well-known Gifford Lectures.

For Professor James it is from the fact of religious

experience alone that conclusions can be drawn regarding the truth of that fact. He distrusts all *a priori* methods, whether of philosophy or scholastic Theism, of making religion objectively convincing, regarding feeling as the primary constituent of all religious belief, and philosophical attempts to construct a reason-compelling religion as springing from the natural desire to interpret and systematize this source. The prior feeling creates the attempt to explain. But feeling is not justified of her children, who deny their parentage, and cast themselves into the form of *a priori* guarantees of the truth of religion, or philosophies of the Absolute. No doubt the inspiration of these efforts is dislike of the subjective and individual aspect of feeling, and the desire to set the basis of religion in universal reason. *Solvitur ambulando*, thinks Professor James. The attempts of philosophy to banish discord and give convincing proofs have led to as many divergencies as can be found in the original feeling. The 'proofs' of formal Theism, and the dogmas of systematic theology tend only to confirm, not to create, faith; to give beauty, but not birth, to our convictions.

The existential judgement, in Professor James's view, is in itself of no great importance. The real worth of our opinions, philosophical and otherwise—the 'cash-value,' as he puts it—is their practical meaning. We can well afford to be indifferent towards conceptions that have no bearing upon conduct, especially in matters of religion. Here, it will be seen, Professor James is taking the pragmatic point of view, which his subsequent work has still more fully exemplified. The metaphysical

attributes of God, beloved by the authors of our formal text-books of theology, are as destitute of practical significance as they are philosophically questionable. For both reasons Professor James is willing to dispense with them. The moral attributes are equally lacking, for the most part, in the power to command anything like universal assent, and, however much they may do towards lending dignity and form to our conceptions of God, they utterly fail as an engine for compelling the reason. 'Ratiocination is a relatively superficial and unreal path to the Deity.'<sup>1</sup> Professor James has no more faith in transcendental Idealism. Unless the warrant can be found in the facts themselves, it is, he thinks, useless to seek for it elsewhere. Not only is metaphysical subtlety intrinsically unauthoritative, but unable, from the very nature of the case, to take the matter out of the hands of the common mother—feeling. It can define, criticize, arrange, but cannot give validity.

A more complete turn of the wheel can scarcely be imagined. Professor James and Hegel are removed as the east is from the west. The task Professor James suggests for philosophy in matters of religion is to be accomplished by abandoning metaphysics and deduction for criticism and induction, and in the form of a science of religion sifting the incidental and contingent, and cleansing the fungus growth of superstition and prejudice from religious belief. He even hints that a critical science of religion might in time command general adhesion, like that of physical science, even amongst the

<sup>1</sup> *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 448.

sceptical, who would accept its conclusions 'much as blind persons now accept the facts of optics.' The inevitableness of philosophy in religion is also recognized, for, as thinking beings, we are bound to construct an intellectual form for our feelings. Professor James is not a champion of *Credo quia absurdum*, but he is emphatic in rejecting all *a priori* and transcendental methods of making religion a logical and intellectual necessity.

Having dismissed metaphysics for psychological analysis, Professor James is limited to religious experience flowing from feeling, and finding individual expression, unable to claim any universality other than that of a purely enumerative character. If reason, however far it bear us, fail to bring us into the holy of holies, we must turn, as Kant turned, elsewhere. And, thinks Professor James, if feeling can help us, why distrust it? Because, no doubt, it is subjective and variable. Grant that; but even then it may serve to satisfy *us*. If we abandon for the time being the ambition to coerce others, we may be able to carve out an individual expression of faith that fulfils our personal requirement. And, since that is our main want, it should be our foremost quest. Moreover, as Professor James emphatically says, the reality that has meaning is personal, individual reality. 'As soon as we deal with private and personal phenomena, as such, we deal with realities in the completest sense of the term.' 'The axis of reality runs solely through the egoistic places.'<sup>2</sup> 'Individual-

<sup>1</sup> *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 498.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 499.



ity is founded upon feeling, and the recesses of feeling, the darker, blinder strata of character, are the only places in the world where we catch the real fact in the making.'<sup>1</sup> Each man's religion is, at its best, an attempt to respond to the deepest reality of his experience.

It by no means follows that we are hereby debarred from seeking out some general conclusions; at any rate, from inquiring whether there be an irreducible minimum. When we have stripped away all the personal and individual wrappings, the 'overbeliefs,' our analysis may discover a common ground, nucleus, and foundation, which, when clothed with its overbeliefs, takes its place in the world as concrete religious experience. Such nucleus must necessarily be small, and it is obvious that the more inclusive we make our survey the less will be the final result we abstract.

Before proceeding to ask what this residuum may be, it is noteworthy that in Professor James's opinion faith, from a psychological point of view, must be held to be no mere anachronism, but a present necessity. The essence of religion is feeling and conduct, and the 'faith-state' is a biological as well as a psychological phenomenon. Therein religion has a permanent, and by no means unimportant place in the making of life. Faith is 'among the forces by which men live.'<sup>2</sup>

The conclusions which are drawn from Professor James's extensive survey are well worth quoting in full. 'Summing up,' he declares, 'in the broadest

<sup>1</sup> *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 501.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 505.



possible way the characteristics of the religious life, as we have found them, it includes the following beliefs:

‘ 1. That the visible world is part of a more spiritual universe, from which it draws its chief significance.

‘ 2. That union or harmonious relation with that higher universe is our true end.

‘ 3. That prayer, or inner communion with the spirit thereof—be that spirit “ God ” or “ law ”—is a process wherein work is really done, and spiritual energy flows in and produces effects, psychological and material, within the phenomenal world.<sup>1</sup>

‘ Religion also includes the following psychological characteristics :

‘ 4. A new zest which adds itself like a gift to life, and takes the form either of lyrical enchantment or of appeal to earnestness and heroism.

‘ 5. An assurance of safety and a temper of peace, and, in relation to others, a preponderance of loving affections.’<sup>2</sup>

Professor James continues by asking whether any common testimony can be found beneath the many expressions of religion that religious experiences afford, and whether such testimony can be considered true. The first question is answered in the affirmative. The common testimony is to an uneasiness and its solution, a sense of something wrong, and of deliverance therefrom by a due connexion with higher power. Herein, thinks Professor James, all religions meet.<sup>3</sup>

The second question is met with much caution,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also Sabatier, *Outlines*, &c., p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 485-6.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Sabatier, *Outlines*, &c., p. 21.

Professor James designating his reply a hypothesis only. Religious experience introduces us to a 'something more.' That something more is described by reference to that well-known psychological entity the sub-conscious self, and stated in the lowest terms possible: 'We have in the fact that the conscious person is continuous with a wider self, through which saving experiences come, a positive content of religious experience, which, as it seems to me, is literally and objectively true as far as it goes.'<sup>1</sup> Beyond this is 'overbelief'; but overbeliefs, though they can be ignored for what is, after all, the purely theoretical purpose of seeking out the fundamental fact of religious experience, are necessary in order that each may have somewhat with which to drape and colour this naked and pale extract, and constitute it a practical and serviceable expression of religious life and activity. Indeed, 'the most interesting and valuable things about a man are his ideals and overbeliefs,'<sup>2</sup> and, as an example of the latter, Professor James sets forth his own—'of a somewhat pallid kind, as befits a critical philosopher'—which briefly put (so at least a general survey of his writings would suggest) is in a God whose attributes are goodness and personality, and from whom there is an inflow of energy in the faith-state and prayer-state—an attitude to which Professor James holds, despite the fact that thereby he may be ranked as one of the 'piecemeal, or crasser' supernaturalists, for he does not hesitate to say that, however repugnant

<sup>1</sup> *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 515.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

to the 'scientific' spirit, such a hypothesis is most adequate to the facts, and upon this overbelief he is willing to make his 'personal venture.'

The justification of this personal venture is set forth in an attractive way in one or two of the essays in *The Will to Believe*, particularly in that from which the book takes its title, where it is contended that belief is formed in a practical manner for practical ends. The theoretic way to believe is by a dispassionate review of, and judgement upon, the facts. In practice the actual stimulus to the formation of belief is the desire to confirm one's own faith or opinion—a fact no less true in science than in religion. The volitional side of our nature is uppermost in belief.

Moral and religious questions present forced options. Religion claims to bestow a good—if we believe. To disbelieve and sceptically to suspend judgement debar us equally from partaking. The question, therefore, is whether we are so greatly to fear the possibility of error as to refuse in consequence the chance of gaining truth; or so greatly to esteem truth that we risk error. It is patent that either course of action involves a risk. One course or other we must take, otherwise judgement goes against us by default. In making our decision we are bade remember that there are cases where faith in a fact can help to create the fact, when faith creates its own verification. Under the circumstances, is not belief the more rational way? At least we can claim the right and freedom to believe. Here, of course, we are still upon a strictly individualistic basis, but the gain in personal liberty must

be counted as compensation for the loss of the power of compulsion.

The point is further illustrated by a clever essay entitled 'Reflex Action and Theism.' The structural unit of the nervous system is a triad—stimulus, reaction in the nerve-centres, discharge. In terms of the mind the same thing is expressed by perception, assimilation, and conduct, which Professor James designates as departments 1, 2, and 3. If department 2 exists for working up the material supplied by department 1, it must itself be dependent on department 3, since the world for us is a selection of certain relations which, as essential for our purpose, we pick out of a vast indefinite sum-total to the ignoring of the rest. If this be so it follows that department 3 dominates its associates, and practical interests lead the way. Philosophy may be said to belong to department 2, and to consist in the harmonizing of the facts that department 1 presents; but, if department 3 is supreme, no philosophy is satisfactory that is not congenial to the powers we possess, and that does not definitely answer the practical interests. From this point of view Professor James maintains that Theism is the most rational and serviceable solution.

One other point is of interest, and may briefly be noted. Professor James is sometimes spoken of as the champion of 'the new apologetic'—the argument from experience. It is evident, in the light of what has been said hitherto, that this statement needs some qualification. The aid Professor James gives is in the justification he affords of the right of each to make his own personal venture,

and to have his own overbeliefs, to indulge in his own faith at his own risk. It is at this point that the argument from experience actually begins. Assured of the legitimacy of his own overbelief for himself, the believer may commend it, on the grounds of reasonableness, of personal trial, of the unfailing satisfaction it has given him, to others. This is the argument from experience strictly so called, and as it is commonly understood. Upon that itself Professor James says nothing. Though recognizing that the righteous man lives by his overbeliefs he commends no one, not even his own. To all he gives the right to live, and looks probably for the inevitable survival of the fittest. He has not helped the theologians, but he has done much to vindicate the attitude of those who say, 'We believe, and therefore speak.'

Professor James's method possesses at least the advantage of flexibility. It is adaptable to practical necessities. By recognizing religion as embodying a positive content that is true, and contending for the right of each to interpret that content as best he can, and in a manner valid for himself, it gives a freedom that transcendental methods conspicuously lack. For, having once wound through the intricacies of the metaphysical maze to the centre-compartment—or what we take as such—which is called God, or the Absolute, it is no easy matter to find the way out again to the world of concrete religious fact, or to connect the absolute Deity with the relativities of our experience. Professor James's empiricism lacks theoretic universality, no doubt; but the bewildering crowd

of overbeliefs it sanctions will none the less sooner or later settle themselves, or be settled, by the practical and common-sense tests of reason and experiment, which in the long run are bound to eliminate the fantastic and temporary and establish those that can answer a lasting requirement. We do not need more; we may not be capable of more. An overbelief, or system of overbeliefs, that survives this process may lack the stamp of logical stringency, but is sufficient for practical purposes; and the philosophy of religion, together with all knowledge that seeks for the ultimate by way of the actual, must rest on its journey in provisional results and working hypotheses; the more so since its aim is practical rather than speculative.

A measure of Agnosticism remains—in the elements that we cannot yet induce to enter into combination. Such Agnosticism—the necessary result of the admission that we know in part—may lead to scepticism or to faith: to scepticism if we refuse to act; to faith if we, without waiting for the chimera of objective certainty, determine, with Professor James, ‘to take our life in our hand and act.’ Such a course brings its own justification, but only to those who take it. In all that they do their choice verifies itself. For the rest, they wait in hope.

### § 3. *The Psychological Method and its Critics*

The advantage of studying the psychological method by reference to Professor James lies not only in his eminence in psychology, but in the



unbiased motive that prompts his investigations. He cannot be suspected of prejudice in favour of religious orthodoxy, and he approaches the subject actuated by the same love of fair play that has led him to give so much attention to another subject of which science is shy—psychical research. In his hands the psychological method reveals its great intrinsic value, going direct to man's inner life and immediate experience. Each man's religion is a new creation within his own life, and neither the metaphysical nor the historical method of approaching religion can estimate that intensity which is the pulse of every religion—personal conviction and immediate experience.

Turning to the direct conclusions of Professor James's work, it has often been alleged that they are a mere skeleton, devoid of flesh and life. It should be remembered that they are not intended to be otherwise, saving that they are regarded as the protoplasm, rather than the skeleton, of religion. An extensive development and much accumulation of overbelief must take place before this protoplasm issues in the finished product. In the term 'overbelief' the reader may incline to catch a suggestion of unnecessariness and superfluity—a totally wrong impression, from Professor James's standpoint. To him, overbeliefs are essential, not supererogative, and endued with the characteristics of reality; the difference being that, whilst the union with a wider sphere whereby salvation comes is a fact that bears the marks of objective truth, the overbeliefs have individual validity only—a restriction which is considerably



eased by the contention that the personal is the real in the completest sense of the term. It is not necessary, however, to draw the line so rigidly as Professor James does. The objective truth of religion has, probably, a wider sphere. How wide is, however, a matter that cannot be definitely settled. It would receive different estimates from different quarters, for there is no general agreement as to what constitutes overbelief.

On the other hand, it may be alleged that anything may be obtained from such a review as that of Professor James, according to the prepossessions of the reviewer. His common nucleus, an uneasiness and its solution, may be said to be not characteristic even of those more developed forms of the religious consciousness with which alone he attempts to deal, much less of all religion. It is probable that, until there is a more general agreement concerning the definition of religion, there will be no common assent as to its general characteristics. If religion be taken, as it has been previously suggested, as the expression of the conviction that due relation to higher power than human is necessary for the right adjustment of life, it is still obvious that only the sense of maladjustment makes the matter urgent. A relation harmoniously adjusted would be accepted, one might almost say, neutrally. It is the sense of something wrong that is the stimulus. Afterwards the relation may become more harmonious, but it is the absence, not the presence, of the right relation which urges man towards God. If this be so, 'an uneasiness and its solution' is by no means

a wholly inappropriate description, as Sabatier likewise shows.

The abnormality of many of the instances selected by Professor James has also been disparaged, and it has been urged that results obtained from 'religious freaks' are essentially valueless. It is probable that, had his survey been limited to normal forms, the disregard of the abnormal would have been held sufficient condemnation. The most vivid forms are naturally included, and, after all, it is not their excrescences and peculiarities, but their common ground upon which reliance is placed. If such a residuum is found even in the abnormal, it confirms the results which Professor James also obtains from analysis of the more normal cases. Moreover, the investigation of individual religious experience must not be limited by what is, after all, an arbitrary standard of normality, so as to exclude as irrelevant the most graphic instances.

By placing the roots of religion in 'the sub-conscious' Professor James has given offence to many critics. In the present state of opinion regarding this phenomenon, and in view of the fact that it is the home of so much that is vague and irresponsible, the course taken may seem rash. It is only fair, however, to remember that Professor James's motive is 'to seek, first of all, a way of describing the "more" which psychologists may also recognize as real.'<sup>1</sup> That is to say, it is a parcimony by which an acknowledged source is

<sup>1</sup> *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 511. On the sub-conscious, cf. Dr. Sanday's lecture 'A Tentative Modern Christology' in his *Christologies Ancient and Modern*.

referred to, instead of postulating a separate and unacknowledged source. This may be effected without implying that religious consciousness has no firmer ground than irrational, sub-conscious uprushes. It might, perhaps, have been better to have dealt with the subliminal self as affording a parallel rather than an explanation, simply for this reason, that, whilst it may not be possible to differentiate sharply between the outward character of the two, the religious consciousness deals with an objectivity which, even though it may blend with the self, and in it the self realizes its true selfhood, is yet interpreted as not-self. In the subliminal consciousness a wider aspect of the self is touched, so unfamiliar as often to take an objective appearance, but one that notwithstanding must be interpreted simply as self.

With the objection that Professor James sets a gulf between faith and knowledge I am not disposed to deal here. It has been met elsewhere. To treat the two spheres of judgement separately is an artificial separation, but a practical convenience, and by this time, surely, that convenience may be allowed without the repetition *ad nauseam* of the charge which every modern Ritschlian has repelled. Judgements of value and of fact present a dualism only to the critics, not to the exponents of the value-judgement.

It should hardly be necessary to state that adherence to the psychological method and reference to Professor James do not bind one wholesale to the specific results of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. That book is to a large extent pro-

visional, as every pioneer work must be, and its method is of more importance than any or all of its conclusions. Many of these may be adopted provisionally, as affording material for further investigation ; but the manner in which the psychological method enables a start to be made from the facts of experience, in the same manner as all scientific investigation starts, is the chief gain.

Finally, two general objections urged against the psychological method may be noticed. It is asserted that for it every religious experience is equally real and true, and hence no reliable conclusions can be drawn.<sup>1</sup> The assertion is correct, but the inference does not follow. While all immediate experience is presented as true, it gains recognition as true only by its congruity with other experience. The psychological method, whilst it works upon individual data, works comparatively, and is as able to discriminate between claimed and validated truth in religion as to distinguish hallucinations from normal presentations.

It is also asserted that religious experience can only be assessed with due regard to its environment and relative position, that psychology abstracts experience from such circumstances, and hence is misleading.<sup>2</sup> The co-relation of history with psychology is sufficient to guard against this objection, and it is further to be noticed that what is most spontaneous, characteristic, and original in religious experience is generally also that which is least related to external environment.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Jevons, *Religion in Evolution*, pp. 53, 54.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Watson, *Philosophical Basis of Religion*, p. 156 seq.

The religious experience of Jesus is not greatly illuminated by a study of Rabbis. It is the outward, and not the inward, form of religion that is most susceptible to the influence of the *Zeitgeist*. The same sense of sin expresses itself in modern as in patristic doctrines, but the doctrines are poles asunder. There is a great similarity about the religious consciousness in all ages, and, in the psychological investigation of religious experience, environment is a far less important factor than it would be, say, in the critical history of doctrine.

Moreover, it should not be forgotten that, upon libertarian principles, there are new factors in every religious experience, not the outcome of the age, but a new creation; and these, one of the chief concerns of religious psychology, can be studied apart from their local aspect.

The province of the psychology of religion is not that of the philosophy of religion, which it serves. Religious philosophy begins where psychology ends. Psychology is a science, religious philosophy assumes the nature of a metaphysic. The classification of psychology under philosophy, and the term 'mental philosophy' still sometimes employed as its synonym, have obscured the fact that psychology is a science, and as such is not a substitute, but groundwork, for philosophical theory. Psychology deals with particulars, religious philosophy with universals. To say, with Dr. Starbuck,<sup>1</sup> that the problems are the same for each, but psychology deals with them piecemeal, philosophy as a whole, is, however, scarcely correct. The subject-matter

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology of Religion*, p. 6.

is the same, but the problems are no more identical than those, shall it be said, of science and of metaphysics? When Professor Eucken<sup>1</sup> opposes the noölogical to the psychological method, stating that the latter expects to reach its goal from immediate experience, whilst the former involves a metaphysic, he forgets that such a goal as psychology can reach from immediate experience is not a religious philosophy, but the data for the construction of one. The use of the psychological method does not involve the substitution of psychology for philosophy, but rather a preparation by the one for the other.

The term 'psychology of religion' implies no sharp division between what is called religious and what is not, in man's consciousness. Religion is essentially pervasive, and is only separated from the rest of man's consciousness by an abstraction which, whilst useful for special purposes, must not be thought absolute. The psychology of religion and ordinary psychology employ the same methods and deal with the same subject-matter, and it is thus a further advantage of the psychological method that it is able to co-ordinate religion with all else that belongs to human consciousness.

From psychology attention now turns to history. The two are complementary. It has already been acknowledged that any religious experience must be studied along with, though it is not fully explained by, contemporary and previous experiences. On the other hand, the history of religion must be studied in the light of psychology. If religion

<sup>1</sup> *Christianity and the New Idealism*, pp. 21-2.

were a mere process, its psychology would be subordinate, but if religion be conceived as springing up afresh in man, if it be regarded as primarily individual, it follows that, even more important than its history is its psychology, and without psychology that history can never be fully assessed. For the history of religion is really the study of the expression of the social psychology and God-consciousness of the race, upon which, as well as upon individual psychology, religious philosophy is based.



## CHAPTER II

### ITS GROUNDWORK IN THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION

#### (B) HISTORY

##### § 1. *The Influence of Anthropology upon the Study of Religion*

AFTER following the psychology of individual expressions of religion, the task of the science of religion is completed by tracing its historical and social aspect. For the purposes of religious philosophy, what anthropology has to say of the origin and earliest forms of religion is of particular interest. Strictly, no doubt, anthropology anticipates the beginning of history in the narrower, more conventional sense of the term ; but if anthropology is not history it is nothing, and that word may be legitimately widened to include what can be ascertained even of the earliest ages. Though unpledged to any particular theory of religion, anthropology influences every modern view. It is concerned with the origin and development, not the implications of religion, yet in a sense it is itself a religious philosophy. Any estimate of religion, even the most rough and informal, is of the nature of a religious

philosophy, and the present time would be ill-chosen to minimize the importance of those estimates which are largely influenced by anthropology. Moreover, though religion does not appeal to its natural history for its authority, neither religion nor its authority can be completely dealt with apart from its original forms and historical development.

During recent years anthropology, aforetime the Cinderella of the sciences, has been rapidly advanced from its lowliness, and now appears in the selectest assembly-rooms of erudite associations. Its progress is largely due to the impetus it has received from evolutionary theories, which have been a fairy godmother to the science which hopes to parallel the tracing of the descent of man by the discovery of the origin and development of his customs, laws, science, philosophy, morals, and religion. As regards the last-named, it has at least succeeded so far as this—that it is no longer possible to posit, by the clean and easy method of former times, a primitive revelation, without at least hearing what the anthropologist has to say. He must therefore be followed as he moves through the infinitely varied, yet by no means dissimilar, strata of the usages, customs, lore, and belief of peoples past and present, seeking to reveal the origin and development of religious theory and practice, and interpreting the adolescence of religion by reference to its embryology.

The method of anthropology is comparative, and its proper sequel is the comparative study of religions, another of the newer sciences, which should be able to follow up through the later histori-

cal religions the traits of primitive religion. The whole would then amount to an attempt to trace the genealogical tree of religion, the birth, pedigree, and relationship of religious belief and practice, and might conveniently be treated as one subject—the Historical Study of Religion. Unfortunately, by a self-chosen limitation, the former part is mainly left to the anthropologists, who, finding amongst their ‘useful savages’ the egg and embryo of religion, adopt the cuckoo’s practice, and entrust the hatching of it to others, the students of comparative religion, who sometimes show no particular interest in anthropology. This needless dualism has lasted too long, and when the two branches of study are united both are likely to be the better for the union.

The attempts to exploit anthropology in favour of some particular theory have been frequent and invariably unsuccessful. For example, it is still sometimes stated that religion has been shown to have its origin in fear, or in the practice of making gifts to obtain favour. Others cross-examine anthropology to educe evidence in support of the old theological presupposition of a primitive revelation, and the history of religion as a devolution or degeneration therefrom. The very simplicity of these facile theories is their undoing. Religion is a stream with many tributaries, and to say ‘This is the source, these the tributaries’ is bound to be a more or less arbitrary proceeding. In this connexion Dr. J. G. Frazer’s words are well worth repeating: ‘No one can well be more sensible than I am of the immense variety and complexity of the

forces which have gone towards the building up of religion; no one can recognize more frankly the futility and inherent absurdity of any attempt to explain the whole vast organism as the product of any one simple factor.' <sup>1</sup> It will, therefore, be best to pass under review one or two of the principal factors which anthropologists associate with the origin of religion and its earliest development, such as Animism, ancestor-worship, and magic, each of which has been claimed by rasher speculators as the *fons et origo* of all religion, and then to attempt some general estimate. The first consideration is naturally given to Animism, a theory which has had, and still has, great vogue as explanatory of religious origins, not only amongst the sciolists but even with the more cautious of investigators.

## § 2. *Animism and Ancestor-worship*

Though the complexity of the sources of religion is now generally acknowledged, most anthropological accounts of its origin still start from the theory developed by Dr. Tylor in his classical work, *Primitive Culture*, under the title Animism.<sup>2</sup> Animism has become public property, and is a theory too familiar to need any but the briefest recapitulation. It suggests that the conception of soul or spirit came to primitive man when he began to reflect upon the difference between sleeping and waking, consciousness and unconsciousness, swoons, trances, and similar states, the living and the dead body. His

<sup>1</sup> *Golden Bough*, 2nd ed., vol. i. p. xvii.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Primitive Culture*, chs. xi.-xvii.

dreams, naïvely believed to be real, and the adventures he underwent therein, were also explained by the same method of concluding simply that a something within him left in sleep and unconsciousness, and returned in waking and consciousness, but in death left the body finally. This microcosm within his macrocosm yielded him, so it is suggested, his first conception of the soul.

Dr. Tylor sees no reason for thinking this belief to be a survival of a higher culture. It is rather the natural explanation and primitive philosophy of the facts. The simplest conception of this 'something' is that which identifies it with the breath. Later reflection introduces further refinements, until such an elaborate classification as that of Egyptian religion is reached.

The earliest ideas about the soul, by no means wholly defunct yet, conceived of it as material. Belief in its existence after death presented no difficulty, however. Invisible in life, it was thought to exist invisible after life. If modern thought finds the idea of survival after death an obstacle, it is due to its refinement only, for to the unclarified mind existence, not extinction, after death seems more natural. Hence Animism, it is claimed, reveals also a footpath by which man reached the doctrine of a future life.

Dr. Tylor divides his theory into two parts. The first concerns the soul that survives death. From this develops the second—the doctrine of spirits. Further hints may have been obtained from dreams where inanimate objects assume the powers of speech and action, from echoes, shadows, the sigh

of the storm and the wail of the wind. It is thus contended that, after projecting the conception of soul to all living creatures, it was extended to moving objects also, which seemed endowed with the characteristics of life, and so finally all natural phenomena came to be regarded as endowed with, or 'worked' by, spirits. Animism thus appears as a ready natural philosophy, easy of application to minds still content with the first stage of explanation—this is because that is; and it is scarcely surprising that the evidence goes to show that it was almost universal in the early thought of mankind.

The transition from Animism to religion usually proceeds upon alternative lines. The process is not always so clear as one could wish, partly because many anthropological studies suffer from an over-luxuriance of illustration, following up every statement by a bountiful lavishness of corroborative evidence, which ranges from ancient Greece to modern Australia, and from New Guinea to Matabeleland. For this reason it is sometimes difficult to see the argument because of the illustrations. Through this thick undergrowth two bush-tracks seem favoured, however. The one proceeds by way of the belief in spirit-possession to demons and demon-possession, fetishism and idolatry, concluding that man, fearing the evil powers of the spirits he had discovered, sought to conciliate them. Religion thus appears as a subsequent development of demonophobia and devil-worship. This theory is generally regarded as implying a *hysteron proteron*, or at least as one-sided, for, as Mr. Clodd points out,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Myths and Dreams*, p. 114.

adoration is found side by side with fear in primitive religion. The more favoured method is that which regards religion as the issue of the attempt to get into relation with the spirits, an attempt facilitated by the practice of ancestor-worship. Souls were believed to continue to exist, and, according to some anthropologists, both friends and foes were alike feared after death, and hence it was thought well to be upon good terms with them. It is perhaps more likely that the origin of ancestor-reverence was natural affection, the desire still to continue services, to provide food, &c., for the dead, as had been done before death. In time these acts become a ritual, are regarded as necessary to the deceased spirit, and so it is argued that the dead ancestor looming in the distance grows into a god. Then tribal tradition embodies the great ancestor, sometimes regarded as the first man, as the great God. Granting this, the rest is easy—polytheism; one god rising from the ruck as more powerful and thus more worshipful, so henotheism; and from that monotheism—all developing from the first conjecture of a ‘little man within.’

Dr. Tylor seems to regard this as the only alternative to the degeneration theory. Herbert Spencer treats it with his customary confidence. Mr. Andrew Lang, though critical, admits that it has given ‘conclusions which possess an air of being firmly established,’ and, with occasional variations, it boasts the support of a majority of anthropologists.

There is no need to examine the theory critically here, either in itself or in that part of it which has subsequently been distinguished as Animatism,



i.e. the belief in the animation of nature.<sup>1</sup> It may be allowed 'without prejudice.' The point at issue is the relation of Animism to religion. Dr. Tylor adopts, as a 'minimum definition' of religion, the 'belief in spiritual beings,'<sup>2</sup> and proceeds, 'under the name of Animism, to investigate the deep-lying doctrine of spiritual beings which embodies the very essence of spiritualistic as opposed to materialistic philosophy.'<sup>3</sup> This procedure is open to very serious objection. In the first place it identifies, by definition without investigation, Animism and religion, which clearly begs the question. Secondly religion is not, and never has been, even in its minimum, belief in, but always relation to, a higher order or power. Thirdly, it cannot be taken as self-evident that this higher order was not conceived till it could be conceived as spiritual, and that religion cannot appear till the notion of spiritual beings arises. A certain plausibility is lent to this assumption by the fact that belief in souls, spirits, and a future life are declared to have originated in Animism, and that to our minds such beliefs are associated with religion. But it by no means follows that religion cannot exist apart from them. Mr. Lang<sup>4</sup> contends that there is no evidence to establish the fact that the Supreme Being of early man was in original conception animistic at all, maintaining,

<sup>1</sup> For a criticism of Tylor's theory and an alternative explanation of the origin of the doctrine of the soul, cf. Crawley, *The Idea of the Soul*, chs. i. and iii. Cf. also Westermarck, *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, vol. ii. pp. 595-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Primitive Culture*, vol. i. p. 383.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 384.

<sup>4</sup> *Making of Religion*, ch. xi.

with much probability, that it is likely that the question of its spirituality would not even be raised at first. It is neither demonstrable nor justifiable even to assume, as the manner of some is, that primitive man conceived as modern man conceives, God first of all as spirit. The doctrine of a future existence was, moreover, admittedly not ethical in its earliest stages; it was not religion until after it was ethical, so that only to the modern mind can its association with Animism even seem to give to Animism a religious character. In short, Dr. Tylor's 'minimum definition' is a pitfall for the unwary traveller who seeks to pass from Animism to religion.

The interjection of ancestor-worship is of no effective help. The sole conclusion the facts warrant is that the reverence paid to ancestors must inevitably tend to assume a quasi-religious character. The deification of ancestors proves absolutely nothing. At a later stage monarchs were deified. Had less been known than is known about this stage, had it not been known that religion existed previous to it, on exactly the same grounds as it is argued that ancestor-worship gave rise to gods, it could be argued that the worship of kings was the 'origin' of deities. Belief in a deity is practically, if not completely, universal, moreover, not less where traces of ancestor-worship are absent than where they are found—a fact which does not favour the supposition. There is also an essential difference in principle between ancestor-worship and worship of a god. Upon the latter man felt himself dependent; but frequently, if not always, primitive

custom reveals the belief that the departed spirit of an ancestor is dependent on the living. Still further, the fact that ancestor-worship is found existing side by side with religion suggests for both a separate origin, for had the one evolved from the other, fusion, not distinction, would be expected.

Perhaps, however, the greatest objection to speaking of religion as a development of Animism, or as a development of a development of Animism, i.e. ancestor-worship, is that Animism itself presupposes a state of culture too developed to be imagined as pre-religious. According to this theory Animism, a 'primitive philosophy,' appeared before religion, and man learnt to philosophize before he learnt to worship. His 'philosophy' leading him to worship ancestors, he revered their shades before he revered any other deity. Is this, I will not say a natural, but a likely order of events? Psychologically, surely, the religious emotions are more elementary than the intellectual exercise required to produce even so rough a philosophy as Animism. It is hardly possible to conceive of man reaching the animistic stage before he could find objects for the exercise of his more elementary powers. It is far more likely that, long before the animistic stage, the supernatural, i.e. the extra-ordinary, called forth feelings of wonder, admiration, and gratitude according as its manifestations perplexed or pleased man, and its agency—I say agency rather than agent—not thought of either as spiritual or unspiritual, was man's first 'god,' the object of religious—rudimentarily religious—emotions.

The conclusion would therefore appear that

religion is prior to Animism. In itself Animism is not a religion, nor even necessarily religious. Dr. Tylor is far nearer the truth when he remarks that it is the groundwork of a religious philosophy. It is a primitive philosophy. The roots of religion and philosophy meet below the surface, but yet are distinct; the growths intertwine, but are not the same. Animism is neither religion nor the source of religion. Some of the most fundamental conceptions of religion may have been derived from it, but that which is essentially religious in religion, that which makes religion religion and not philosophy, cannot be so deduced. Prior to Animism there was that in man's nature which was religious, a 'religiosity,' religious emotion, very inchoately expressing itself. Animism may have helped in an extraordinary degree to make it articulate, but did not create it. Animistic conceptions, as representing an early and wellnigh universal stage of culture, have lineal connexion with subsequent stages, religious, philosophical, and superstitious. But to show that religion has expressed itself animistically is not to show that Animism begat religion.

Paradoxical though it may seem, the very attractiveness of the animistic account of religion is its weakness. It relies upon sequences which, because they appear so possible, are taken as actual. Condensed to a nutshell—man dreamed, hence got the idea of soul, hence projected the idea to other objects, next tended or feared his ancestors' souls, and thus made him gods—the animistic theory reminds one irresistibly of the ingenious cosmology of Lucretius.

Many of that philosopher's conjectures have proved amazingly well-founded, but his imaginings are not thereby ratified wholesale as scientific fact. The short and easy way in which religion is deduced from Animism is solely conjectural, and the verification of certain particulars does not warrant the whole. It is time to protest against the far too unquestioning adoption of the animistic derivation of religion by modern writers,<sup>1</sup> and to suggest that it be shown—for at present it has not been shown—that Animism is psychologically, and probably historically, earlier; that man could only think of God by way of ghosts; and that from Animism itself, not essentially religious or supernatural, the specific character of the religious consciousness and belief in the supernatural is derived. When this is done the time will be more favourable for the assumption than it now is.

### § 3. *Magic and Religion*

That magic and religion are opposed in principle is now generally admitted by anthropologists. In the second edition of *The Golden Bough*, Dr. J. G. Frazer expressly revokes the attitude adopted in the first edition, and acknowledges that the insistence of Sir A. C. Lyall and Dr. Jevons upon the opposition between magic and religion has convinced him that he had not formed a clear general conception of religion, and was disposed to class magic

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hobhouse, *Morals in Evolution*, vol. ii. p. 3. 'Without dogmatizing,' Mr. Hobhouse starts his account of religion with Animism.

loosely with it. Dr. Frazer's view, however, of the relation of the two is that magic precedes religion. Man, having vainly tried to coerce nature by magic, is driven by his failure to conceive gods, whom he approaches more humbly.

Sympathetic magic, which must of course be distinguished from art magic or sorcery, according to Dr. Frazer is based upon two principles—that like produces like, and that ‘things which have been once in contact, but have ceased to be so, continue to act on each other, as if the contact still persisted.’<sup>1</sup> The extent of magic has been most widespread, and its survivals still linger among the peasantry to-day. Like science, magic assumes that the course of events is ordered by law; unlike science, it believes that it can by its own laws rule that course. There is thus an inherent contradiction in magical processes, though one not likely to be detected by their professors. The origin of magic dates back to a time when man is supposed to have been unable to distinguish what was and what was not possible for his powers, and consequently attempted both. It may have been strengthened, as Dr. Tylor suggests, by the mingling of higher and lower civilizations. The latter, continuing its practices, gained, as sorcerers gain, a reputation it would be loath to lose. Hence magic became organized into a definite practice of a definite class.

Though often found in fusion with religion, Dr. Frazer regards magic as the earlier of the two. Unfortunately, as in the case of Animism also, it is not possible to determine the matter by appeal to history,

<sup>1</sup> *Golden Bough*, 2nd ed. vol. i. p. 9.



and a decision must be made on general grounds. Dr. Frazer's grounds are these, that magic is simply a misapprehension of one of the most elementary processes of mind—the association of ideas; whereas the belief that nature is determined by conscious agents belongs to a higher and later stage of culture. In support of this he produces instances to show that, in the most primitive states of modern human society, magic is prominent, religion lacking.

Dr. Frazer suggests that the failure of magic led more thoughtful minds to religion, though the process was long in duration. It is obvious that all depends upon what is understood by religion. This Dr. Frazer recognizes. 'There is probably no subject in the world about which opinions differ so much as the nature of religion, and to frame a definition of it which would satisfy every one must obviously be impossible. All that a writer can do is first to say clearly what he means by religion, and afterwards to employ the word consistently in that sense throughout his work. By religion, then, I understand a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and human life.'<sup>1</sup> Clearly, then, all that Dr. Frazer is entitled, upon his own admission, to assert is that magic precedes a certain aspect of religion which to him seems the most important. But Dr. Frazer takes more than he is entitled to, and assumes that religion does not exist till it exists in this aspect—a totally unwarranted assumption. The whole argument that Dr. Frazer employs depends upon this. If his definition

<sup>1</sup> *Golden Bough*, 2nd ed. vol. i. p. 63.



of religion be allowed, it is not unthinkable that magic precedes religion, for psychologically it seems possible that the attitude of conciliation would follow, not precede, that of force. But just as Dr. Tylor defines religion in terms which give it an appearance of congenital Animism, so Dr. Frazer selects a definition which is very helpful to his magic-before-religion theory. But has Dr. Frazer found the essential of religion without which religion cannot be so called? Historically, so far as we can find out, this would not seem to be the case, since there are tribes with beliefs which, if they are anything at all, are religious, but which do not involve conciliation.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Dr. Frazer has admitted that religion and magic are different in principle, and therefore were not fundamentally identical. Religion does not develop until magic collapses. Whence, then, does it come? It cannot come from magic, because *ex hypothesi* they are different, and magic must fail before religion appears. Apparently, therefore, religion springs out of nothing; it is an invention of man to succeed his broken-down magic. Now it is possible to argue that, upon the failure of magic, man thought that another power must be in the field, greater than himself, and hence came to the conception of gods; but it seems highly improbable that man had arrived at a stage of sufficient familiarity with natural phenomena to try magically to induce them without having been first of all struck with that which appears supernatural in them. If Dr. Jevons<sup>2</sup> be correct in contending that the

<sup>1</sup> See Lang, *Magic and Religion*, ch. iii.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Introduction to History of Religion*, chs. iii. and iv.

negative aspect of the supernatural, i.e. its power of violating and overriding man's expectations, was prior to the positive aspect, the regular sequences which he took as a matter of course, and that from the former man obtained his conception of the supernatural, and only later came to attribute the regular processes to its power, sympathetic magic, in attempting to make the sun shine and the rain fall, is posterior to man's first belief in the supernatural. It therefore appears that it should be placed in order of development not before, but after, religion. It may be argued that man originally believed himself to be able to do what was supernatural by magic, but on the other hand the supernatural seems far more probably to have been distinguished as such by man's very inability to command it, and magic was first directed towards the 'positive' aspect of the supernatural, not at first regarded as supernatural at all.

But even upon Dr. Frazer's own grounds that the simpler is the earlier, it is possible to arrive at a conclusion different from his. That magic preceded the developed belief in higher powers and the systematic effort to conciliate them may be true. But simpler still than the state of mind which tries to 'work' nature by magic are the feelings called out by the unexpected in nature, which first gave to man his idea of the supernatural; and man's attitude to the supernatural probably bore a religious character long before the stage when he had personified it sufficiently to attempt its conciliation. If this be so, the only grounds that Dr. Frazer has for reckoning magic earlier

than religion give way, for the fact that magic may be found when religion is not manifest (Dr. Frazer dares to say 'is conspicuously absent') proves nothing. Indeed, on Dr. Frazer's principles, it is magic that should disappear; and the survival of magic mixed in religion, separate from religion, and amongst tribes of a relatively high intelligence, all of which are found, is not favourable to Dr. Frazer's theory, which, upon present evidence, must be held to be 'not proven.'

#### § 4. *The Origin of Religion as Interpreted by Anthropology*

The study of anthropology is necessarily involved in certain restrictions of a general nature,<sup>1</sup> and, in so far as it deals with religion, in difficulties of a special character also. As regards the former, direct data so far as primitive man is concerned are of course unobtainable. Lacking them, the methods of study have been too often those of unassisted common sense, and conjecture has played too great a part. Hence the still lingering repugnance against treating anthropology as a science. Psychology, sociology, biology, are now, however, much more closely connected with anthropology than formerly, and the alliance has greatly enhanced its value. From the study of the mind of the child some illuminating suggestions have also been derived. The great bulk of anthropological material, however, is obtained from the study of modern

<sup>1</sup> A good discussion of objections is given by Mr. Lang, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, Appendix B.

savages. It is by no means wholly unreasonable to assume that by this means much of the habits of primitive man may be reconstructed, and many reasons, psychological and otherwise, support this assumption. It none the less remains true that the modern savage has a lineage as ancient as the modern savant, and cannot have remained through the ages marking time, fossilized in primitive custom. It is wellnigh impossible to trace his descent with any approach to certainty, but upon evolutionary principles it is certain that some process has been taking place, and it is not likely that such a process has been circular. It largely depends upon our own ideas whether any evolutionary process be called progressive or retrogressive, but it can hardly be that the lapse of centuries and millenniums has brought little change even amongst the lowest peoples. Forgotten arts, crafts, beliefs, even civilizations, are far from uncommon, and to deduce from the customs of the modern savage those of primitive man cannot be an absolutely safe proceeding, even if it be justifiable in certain respects. It must, therefore, be realized how far anthropology works in the realm of probability, and it will not help that science to forget this its intrinsic limitation.

Connected with this is the additional difficulty of deriving assured conclusions even from admitted evidence, which receives the most diverse handling from various experts. Further, it is almost impossible to agree as to the chronological order even of those stages of development through which all acknowledge man to have passed. Another limi-

tation arises from the restrictions or bias of the collectors of evidence, whether missionaries or others, only few of whom are really skilled in the work. The raw material of anthropology is not always pure. Many of these difficulties will, no doubt, be removed as time goes on and fresh evidence accumulates, but they must not be wholly overlooked.

Amongst the special difficulties of dealing with religion must be placed the fact that religion, from its nature, asserts itself amongst all customs, and intermingles with primitive science, philosophy, magic, mythology, superstition, ancestor-worship, and the like. Seeing that the anthropologists cannot agree upon a definition of the thing to be sought, it must follow that a good deal of confusion between religion and those things with which it manifests itself must arise, and will arise, until there is closer agreement as to what constitutes the essence of primitive religion.

Further still must it be remembered that religious beliefs and observances, on account of their sacred associations and the natural reticence of the believer, together with dread of breaking taboo, and dislike of alien curiosity, are generally the least understood and worst reported of all anthropological facts, and evidence concerning them must be earmarked accordingly.

Bearing these limitations in mind, it may now be asked what anthropology can contribute to the study of religion's origin. Those who deduce religion from Animism, or magic, or anything else, assume a pre-religious stage. It is assumed so

unquestioningly that it seems almost rash to ask what evidence exists in support of it. Yet, upon investigation, only the slenderest reasons appear. The well-worn question of non-religious peoples may be raised, it is true, as it has been raised and settled and raised again a score of times. Without waiting for the final proof or disproof of this unknown quantity, it may be asserted straightway that the absolute non-existence of religion among certain tribes, were it ratified even, would not justify the assumption of a universal pre-religious stage. Their religion might have lapsed. In any case, the outward absence of religious observances is not in itself, among savages any more than among civilized persons, proof of the entire absence of religious belief. If the supposed absence of religion in a very few instances—and apart from certain *a priori* reasons this is all the evidence there is—could support the assumption of a universal pre-religious stage, the at least practical universality of religion could be adduced as better reason, on the same grounds, for denying it.

It is somewhat strange to find, side by side with this assumption of a pre-religious stage, the modern tendency to repudiate a sharp distinction between animal and brute psychology. Awe, and, in some sense, adoration are emotions that are manifested in animals. In man the same emotions appear invested with a religious character. It is, therefore, concluded apparently that this character did not reveal itself till after a certain stage of culture. Strict proof cannot be obtained for either view, but it seems somewhat arbitrary to treat religion

as an intellectual invention grafted upon these emotions at a later date. It would appear more natural to regard them as possessing, even in earliest man, a rudimentarily religious significance.

Is it possible to do so? The old postulate of a religious faculty existing apart from anything the brutes possess, and supposed to be divinely bestowed, is hardly capable of defence to-day; but it would be sheer perversity to treat religion as if it were not a human *differentia* on the ground that the emotions that exist as religious in man are also found in brutes. That would be to identify religion with certain emotions instead of referring it to a distinctive object of these emotions. The difference in the conception of the object distinguishes clearly the emotions as religious. A savage's awe of the supernatural is *toto coelo* different from the same emotion in a dog with regard to his master.

If a sharp dividing-line could be drawn between man and brute, it might be possible to point to the origin of religion. Since that is impossible, the origin of religion is buried behind the blurred haze that lies over the pathway which joins the two points, which to us are none the less distinct, between the lowest man and the highest brute. It may be assumed that there is no break, that continuity is complete, but that must not prevent the facts being handled as we have them, and they are these: that, whilst the emotions that are religious in man exist in brutes, they do not exist as religious in brutes; but their religious quality is something added to them in their passage to man, a something that belongs to man as man.



Religion, then, may be regarded as characteristically human. The existence of irreligious individuals, or of alleged irreligious tribes, does not contradict this statement, any more than the existence of colour-blindness contradicts the normality of the colour-sighted. If latent or lost religion be not the explanation, it can hardly be categorically asserted that there is a complete absence of religious capacity amongst the most pronounced atheists of civilization or savagery. The beginnings of religion are rather to be sought in the first movements of this characteristic capacity of man, rather than in any 'primitive revelation' externally delivered, or any intellectual advance which yielded conceptions which were suitable for religious interpretation.

Admitting, then, that religion is a general human characteristic, the question arises as to whether earliest man can be thought of as having exercised his religious feelings. It is admitted that the distinction between natural and supernatural is met with in the lowest stages known to us,<sup>1</sup> and this difference is all that is needed to give to the primitive emotions a religious character. Even such primitive peoples as the Veddás have an unexpectedly high idea of supernatural power; so that it would seem that it is an idea more easily held by primitive minds than at one time was thought. Is it possible that some such distinction was made by man at the very earliest stage?

A clue to an answer may be obtained by reference

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Westermarck, *Origin and Development*, &c., vol. ii. p. 582.

to Naturalism. By another usage of a much-used and abused term, Naturalism, or Naturism, is defined by certain anthropologists as a stage prior to Animism. It denotes the vague conception of power, or powers, everywhere. 'In most cases the indefinite something which they [i.e. certain Indian jungle tribes] fear and attempt to propitiate is not a person at all, in any sense of the word. . . . The idea which lies at the root of their religion is that of power, or rather of many powers.'<sup>1</sup> Naturalism thus affords scope for the crudest expression of the religious sentiments. The term is unfortunate, its associations suggest natural, not supernatural objects, and Supernaturalism would more closely characterize the stage in question; but it probably represents the earliest form of religion. It is, however, incorrect to state that 'in Naturalism man and animal meet together.'<sup>2</sup> An animal's fear of the unusual is merely because it is unusual, and is altogether emotional and unquestioning. Man may share in the same unreasoned panic, but Naturalism by definition implies more than mere

<sup>1</sup> Risley, *Census of India*, 1901, vol. i. p. 352, quoted by Clodd.

<sup>2</sup> Clodd, *Animism*, p. 22. The assertion is supported by a story of Prof. Romanes's dog being terrified by a bone drawn by an invisible thread. A similar case is related by James (*Principles of Psychology*, vol. ii. p. 420). It was, of course, merely the unusual that frightened the dog. It was also frightened by soap bubbles (Romanes, *Animal Intelligence*, p. 455 seq.). Such fear has no reference to anything but the mere strangeness of the event. I may add that I have tried the experiments unsuccessfully with several different animals.

fear of the unusual: it implies reference to a mysterious object behind the unusual, and hence has a certain semi-religious character.

The assumption, therefore, of a pre-religious stage appears gratuitous. None of the permanent characteristics of man's nature sprang suddenly into being. Each goes back further and further till it is lost in the dim light that shrouds the origin of man. The strength of the assumption really lies in the confusion of organized and primary religion, from regarding religion as firstly the affair of the tribe and latterly the affair of the individual. So acute an observer as Professor Carveth Read<sup>1</sup> falls into this error, and states that religion is 'of relatively recent origin (biologically),' and also that 'personal religion is an off-shoot of the social.' At the same time he admits that 'Animism must have originated in the imagination of individuals.' Is it not equally evident that religion in its primary form also arose in individuals, that personal religious feeling comes first and only subsequently organizes itself in social religion? It seems impossible to account for social religion at all, to hazard any conjecture how social religion could have arisen, did not individual religion precede it.<sup>2</sup> Social religion may be post-animistic, since, until definite conceptions emerged, there would be no basis for the union of ideas social religion implies. In short, religion gained intellectually rather than religiously from Animism, and could not have gained at all but

<sup>1</sup> *Natural and Social Morals*, p. 226.

<sup>2</sup> For the implications of social religion generally cf. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, Lect. ii.

for prior religious feelings, whose earliest expression would be so elemental as to be possible for the lowliest type of mankind, even as they are at the present time. Westermarck<sup>1</sup> contends that the moral judgements have an emotional origin. If religious judgements should arise from a similar source, it is precarious to assume that they could find no expression till after a certain stage of intellectual culture. No definite point can be safely selected as the origin of religion. Such points may be epochs in its progress, but its source recedes still further and further away. If a definite starting-point is demanded it should be sought in some missing mental link somewhere between the mentalities of man and brute. As, however, this must be arbitrarily chosen and purely hypothetical, it is preferable to do without it, and to say simply that whenever you change the name of your science from zoology to anthropology, you begin to deal with some rudiments of the exercise of religious capacity, however lowly and incoherent its beginnings may be conceived to have been.

Against the view that the religious character of the primitive emotions of fear, adoration, &c., is constituted by their reference to a supernatural object, it will doubtless be urged that this implies the idea of causality, which is psychologically relatively late. The same objection is successively offered against practically every idea that is ascribed to primitive man, until nothing beyond brute psychology remains. Yet one is supposed to be dealing with beings who can properly be called

<sup>1</sup> *Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, vol. i. ch. 1.

human. It is really the turn of these critics to attempt a little construction, instead of perpetual negation, and declare what does differentiate man from brute. That any developed notion of causality is relatively late may be granted, but this is not necessarily involved. Primitive man, like the animals, was powerfully affected by the unusual. Whatever strongly attracts attention is recalled subsequently in imagination, and imagination is pictorial thought. The recalled image is *ipso facto* different from the experienced sensation, and as such prepares the way for differentiating also between the manifestation and a 'something' behind it. To speak of this 'something' being conceived as cause, or even power, being personified or animistically represented presupposes too much; but if there is any distinction between man and brute, between anthropology and zoology, it must consist in some extra-mental capacity. The sequence of antecedent-consequent is one with which the higher animals are fully familiar. Very little extra mental power would be needed to make the association a more general one, and from this it is but a step to reverse the order and imagine vaguely a certain something behind an event which made a strong impression upon the mind, and thus to attach the emotions that the event evoked to that object.

It may be further objected that these inchoate beginnings are not properly to be called religion, and further that religion is not constituted by shadowing an object but by relation to it. The first objection is a matter of terminology, and if it

be thought proper to reserve the term 'religion' for a later stage it can be done. With regard to the second, the attachment of an emotion to a supernatural object is in some sense a relation. All that has been here contended is that the evidence for regarding man as reaching a comparatively high state of culture without religion, and then originating it, is inconclusive. Accordingly, it has been urged that the more natural course is to trace religion back to the very earliest rudiments in earliest man. If it be said that these are not sufficient to constitute religion in any intelligible sense, it may still be allowed that they form its embryo, and no hard-and-fast line can be drawn separating the embryo from the product into which it develops.<sup>1</sup> In any case, religion would seem to be much older than most anthropologists will allow.

### § 5. *The Comparative Study of Religious Phenomena*

It would seem, therefore, that anthropology should not expect to offer an account of the origin of religion. It can afford, however, a very probable account of its earliest developments, and in tracing this development it is quite arbitrary to draw a dividing-line between anthropology and the comparative study of religion.<sup>2</sup> The contribution of

<sup>1</sup> Professor Leuba speaks of 'unorganized religiosity' as 'the necessary precursor of organized religion' (*The Psychological Origin and the Nature of Religion*, p. 10). The phrase is a happy one.

<sup>2</sup> On the relations of anthropology and the comparative study of religion cf. Farnell, *Evolution of Religion*, Lects. i. and ii.

Animism to religion has already been noticed. Magic, though actually 'a parody of religion,' became a method of essaying the supernatural, and mingled with religion in general mainly to the detriment of the latter. Fetishism—a word of many meanings—may have been the outcome of magic; if not it must be taken as representing a low and largely perverted application of man's religious feeling. Idolatry, which may or may not be connected with Fetishism, is an expression of the desire for concreteness and localization on the part of the deities. Totemism is claimed to have yielded the custom of animal sacrifice, the sacrificial meal, the holy place, pillar, and altar. In its early form it appears as 'a primitive monotheism,' and the union of totems may have led to polytheism. It has also been urged that from it originated the earliest form of worship.<sup>1</sup> But that Totemism is the 'origin' of religion, as has been stated, is a conjecture so rash that it is hardly worth while to subject it to examination. The excesses of the enthusiastic totemists have now come generally to discredit.

The relation between religion and morality affords fresh ground for scientific study. Amongst primitive people the two appear often, though not always, sharply distinguished. Subsequently there is a *rapprochement*, finally an intermingling. Customs like that of taboo, which have come to be endowed with an ethical significance, claim afterwards a religious sanction, and in process of time tribal morality may become almost indistinguishable from tribal religion.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Jevons, *Introduction to History of Religion*, p. 141.



Passing to the higher world-religions, firmer ground is felt under the feet. Whilst personal religion is unaffected by the comparative study of religious phenomena, it is impossible that the forms and creeds in which it embodies itself should remain uninfluenced. I am not able to accept the comfortable assurance that 'origin does not affect validity.' The origin of personal religion within the soul itself is the guarantee of its validity, but if it be shown that, for example, the creeds of the present day owe their form largely to the influence of certain Greek metaphysical conceptions, it can hardly be that they can still be regarded as the exact embodiment of personal religious experience at the present time. The comparative study of religion may afford a real service to personal religion if it loosen the bonds which are only too apt to straiten and narrow its expression. In dealing with the expressions of religious belief and worship, the science of religion has to bear in mind more than their literality. It must remember the spiritual temper of the age. Nothing is more common, in the history of religion, than to find the ideas of a former period maintained in a later age which regards them from a new spiritual standpoint, generally higher, but, in cases of religious degeneracy, lower than that of the age which first adopted them. It is obvious that to judge the age by its creeds is, therefore, often misleading; the creeds are rather to be judged by the age, and the outward forms must be estimated by as close a realization as is possible of the standpoint from which their professors regarded them.

It must not be forgotten that the comparative study of religion deals with the outward workings of an inward experience. It assumes that a community in outward manifestation marks a community in inward experience. Such an inward similarity it is not unreasonable to look for. It is sometimes charged upon those who base their religious philosophy upon psychology and history that they must choose one or other, not both. Individual religious experience is said to be entirely subjective, and therefore cannot be studied except singly and in itself. But this is to forget that religious experience claims to be a relation to the greatest of all objectivities—God. To put a matter so palpitatingly personal into impersonal form may seem an outrage, but if *a*, *b*, and *c* are individuals in religious relation to a power *M*, higher than each, and common to all, *M-a*, *M-b*, *M-c* may be expected to have certain similarities by reason of *M*, the constant quantity in each, apart from any similarity between *a*, *b*, and *c*. In all individual religious experience there is a unique element, constituted not only by the individual's own uniqueness, but also by the consequent particularity of God's relation to him. Together with this, however, there is a common element, supplied by the common character of the individual and the constant character of God. Upon this community of experience manifesting itself in outward similarities the comparative study of religion relies. In this manner, also, is it legitimate to use the history of religion as a light upon the psychology of individual expressions of religion; for, though it cannot be assumed deter-

ministically that any religious experience is the mere product of preceding religious influences, it is none the less certain that it cannot properly be estimated apart from them. From the standpoint that has been adopted throughout this survey religion has been primarily regarded as a personal matter, but it is recognized as assuming necessarily a social character, and embodying itself in objective expressions. These factors, in their turn, react upon personal religion; for, however spontaneous it may be, it is impossible to regard it as unaffected by the conditions under which it finds outlet. Indirectly, therefore, knowledge of these throws light upon the character of personal religion, and religious history reflects back upon religious psychology.

#### § 6. *The Science of Religion, Religion, and Religious Philosophy*

It should be a truism to say that the science of religion is not a religion or a religious experience, though it would seem that this self-evident fact, if acknowledged, is not always acted upon. Less clearly, however, is it recognized that the science of religion can never fully account for or explain religion. Like all sciences, that of religion is an abstraction from experience, based upon certain hypothetical presuppositions, which justify themselves by working well—within their own range. But any religion or religious process, taken as it must be by the science of religion, apart from its vital experience, and apart from that belief in it which makes it live, is treated in abstraction.

The ultimate truth or falsity of religion need no more be a concern for the student of the science of religion than the ultimate existence of force, or matter, for the working physicist. To the religious, on the other hand, it is everything. Science deals with the facts of religion from a material standpoint, as appearances in space and time, as causes and effects. Personal religion, as directly experienced, is entirely a different thing. Supposing that religion be analysed, as by certain writers, into a mixture of the emotions of admiration, awe, and reverence: the resultant effect is none the less not merely admiration plus awe plus reverence. That is the analysis of scientific abstraction; but religion, instinct with the believer's belief, is far more than a mere compound of sensations. To dissect the body of religious experience is possible, but not to dissect its living spirit. Neither psychology dealing with individual manifestations, nor history dealing with racial manifestations, can tell what religion is, but only in what forms it reveals itself. The former scientist neglected or despised religion, his modern successor embodies it in a science; but it can neither aid science nor religion to forget the limits whilst appreciating the labours of the science of religion.

The philosophy of religion serves a function different from that of the science of religion. The latter deals with a material process and outward development, the former with a mental process and inward development. But the philosophy of religion depends upon the science of religion for its raw material, its facts. For it the science of

religion hews wood and draws water, and in doing so has found new forests and dug new wells. A religious philosophy is not a religion, but it must attempt more than is possible for the science of religion. It must find in its psychology more than scientific technicality, in its history more than pure historicity. It is impossible to deal with religion as one deals with geology, or adequately to estimate it from the scientific and mechanical standpoint only. The history of religion has a spiritual implication, and traces the outward movement of a spiritual process and development. A mechanical process is the inevitable procession from cause to effect. The history of religion is dotted with new starting-points, with fresh revelations of the present which enter into and modify the heritage of the past. The history of religion is the history of the manifestation of that which, within the time-process, is above its temporality; and a mere temporal sequence, a chronicle of appearing and disappearing phenomena, is far from being the story of the unfolding of God in time.<sup>1</sup>

Religion, therefore, manifests within itself an eternal principle, and with that principle religious philosophy must concern itself. If the danger of the predominantly scientific attitude lies in forgetting this, the danger of the predominantly philosophic attitude lies in misinterpreting it. To treat the facts of religion as witnessing to

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller discussion of the relation of God to the time-process see the next chapter. Time as a human category, the procession from past to present, and present to future, the process of decay and change, is here referred to.

any one clearly defined principle, such as the conservation of value, the effort of man to transcend himself, or the like, is apt to mean reading into them a philosophical prepossession rather than reading from them. It is highly problematical whether we, dwelling within the religious process, can gain more than the dimmest inkling of its significance in totality; and to treat it as if we stood without it, taking a bird's-eye view of the whole, is to arrogate to ourselves the prerogative of the God who called it into existence.

It is therefore safer, whilst remembering always the eternal principle in religion, to avoid dogmatizing about its nature. To remember it will be a safeguard against judging that the abstraction of the scientific view-point yields a complete account of the significance of religion. To avoid *a priori* conclusions concerning its nature need not have the effect of invalidating the effort of religious philosophy to draw more closely towards the heart of religion than can the science of religion, for it will none the less deal not simply with the biology and natural history of religion, but with its basis in reality, its life and spirit. A religious philosophy must try to afford a metaphysic of religion; but even this is incapable of affording that personal conviction of truth which is felt only by the religious themselves. To them the assurance of the truth of their convictions comes with the convictions themselves, and the religious man lives by his faith.

An empirical religious philosophy finds sufficient groundwork in the psychology which reveals the

roots of religion in the individual consciousness, and history, which shows their extent and power in the life of the race. Religious philosophy interprets the findings of the science of religion and places them in wider relations, yet it is not merely a passive interpreter, but has power to select, discriminate, revise, and even restate the facts. Yet it can only justify itself, not by *a priori* canons, but by showing that it does so in fidelity to the facts themselves. In the next chapter some suggestions towards an interpretation of the primary significations of religious experience are advanced. It is not claimed to be the only possible way of regarding them ; merely that it is a justifiable and not inconceivable rendering. Its value comparatively with that of other interpretations it will not be attempted to assess. It is, however, a comfort as well as a caution to be assured that time, with its quiet unconcern towards our most hotly held convictions, will settle the contention at its own pace by carrying on with it the truth that was in them, and leaving their error to crumble to its dust.



## CHAPTER III

### SUGGESTIONS TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

#### § 1. *Religious Experience as a Basis for Religious Philosophy*

It would be a sorry truism to state that all philosophy must begin somewhere, and it is almost equally obvious that the starting-point must be assumed, and fall within human experience—the pit from whence all our thought-schemes are digged, however chastely their transcendental erections cover the nakedness of their foundations. The ideal point of departure is, no doubt, something self-evident, but the history of philosophy shows very pointedly that self-evidence has different connotations for the constructor and the critic respectively. It may, however, be asked whether there is any right or necessity to demand registered starting-points. A wide latitude may be allowed, provided unnecessary capital is not required to enable the philosopher to start in business for himself. Experience justifies the belief that systems founded on false assumptions early reveal the results of their congenital defects, but those which endure and meet a permanent habit of thought thereby, to a large degree, justify their initial

ground. A philosophy is known by its fruits, and its issue establishes or condemns its origins.

It is not necessary therefore that, before a start can be made from the ground of religious experience, every other possible ground for a religious philosophy should be criticized out of existence. All that is needful is to offer some justification for such a beginning, and if that can be effected the rest may be left to results. If the results more adequately, or even as adequately, meet the requirements of religion and of philosophy, if they can satisfy the volitional and emotional as well as the intellectual needs of man, a philosophy so based can take its place amongst the types of thought which variously try to comprehend and express the implications of human experience.

Psychology and history testify abundantly to the permanence and influence of religion upon man. In the most valid sense of a sorely abused term, religious experience is a fact, and although numerical proportion is a secondary consideration, there can be little doubt that such experience is influential in the great majority of mankind. Whether it is believed to be true or false, and however it may be judged, it is a fact of psychology and history, which, if only for the empirical reasons of its extent, persistence, and power, demands both attention and investigation.

It may be granted that in many cases there *seems* at least to be no original or spontaneous experience of religion. For many, religion appears to be a ritual of observances, acquired by inheritance, enjoined by custom, retained by habit, and

expressed in fixed forms. At the same time it must be remembered that a mere routine invariably tends to wear itself out, and when it is also remembered that, as far back as historical research can trace, religion has continued to exist in the face of continual disappointments and active opposition, prejudicial, intellectual, and even moral, it is surely patent that it must repeatedly have renewed itself by fresh inflows of energy, which *ex hypothesi* can only have been derived from those to whom it is not a mere custom and round of observances. Nothing else can account for the persistence of religion. As a matter of fact, history reveals a constant succession of these intenser spirits in whom religious experience is fresh, spontaneous, and original. It is their energy which gives to religion a momentum which carries along with it as passengers those who conform only to religious externals, and without which religion would cease to be even an observance for the passive acquiescents who perform it by rote. These are they who are not only of interest to psychology, but of influence in history.

A philosophy of religious experience will naturally, therefore, be concerned with these rather than with the whole mass of persons generally. It is not necessary to affirm that the passively religious have no gleam of an original religious experience, or deep-seated conviction within. It seems probable that they, too, have their moments of inspiration, otherwise, perhaps, the very routine they follow would grind itself out; but their unexpressiveness offers no clear data; it is blurred and

shapeless. M. Auguste Sabatier is surely right, therefore, in appealing directly to the greater religious minds. Professor James follows the same course. One of the common mistakes of the opponents of the psychological method is the supposition that it inevitably means that all mankind, pagan and Christian, Buddhist and Muhammadan, Theist and Ju-Juist, forms impartially its basis, and it is easy to make merry over the hopelessness of the attempt to construct anything from such a medley of material. If, however, the contention already advanced, which can hardly be gainsaid, is remembered, that the greater minds (as speaking religiously, not intellectually, 'greater hearts' might be the more expressive description) are responsible for the continuation of religion, it is not only justifiable, but inevitable, that in order to find religious experience at first hand, appeal should be made to these, at least primarily.

Such restriction, therefore, hardly needs a formal justification. It is inevitable. It need not be too tightly drawn. No doubt the bulk of vivid religious experiences are Christian, but any experiences of strong expression may serve. Western philosophy concerns itself with the work of the greater minds of the West, and every new essay defines itself or is defined by relation thereto. No one questions the limitation, though there are Eastern systems of even more ancient lineage, and of vast complexity, to which the manifest of the West seems contradictory, and whose own manifest does not convince the Occidental mind. It is presumed, however, by the West that its own philosophy expresses more

adequately whatever truths are contained in Eastern systems, and the devotee of Hegel or Kant goes on undisturbed by the Vedanta. Philosophy assumes that it is entitled to limit its interest to the best expressions. The cases may not be complete parallels, but in another sphere it is not asking more when it is suggested that, for the purposes of a religious philosophy, construction shall proceed unencumbered by a bulk of unexpressive materials which adds nothing of constructive value. An evolution traced through its lowest forms is none the less only understood in the light of its highest forms.

One primary justification, at least, can be claimed for a philosophy that bases itself upon religious experience. It meets facts which neither Naturalism nor Intellectualism can explain. Faith, prayer, communion, worship, all the expressions of religious feeling so inveterate, so influential in mankind, are so much vanity to Naturalism and so much superfluity to Intellectualism. The days are past when an *a priori* system can ride roughshod over a great part of human experience, and explain away what it cannot explain. Philosophy must explain life in its concrete fullness, not in abstract outline, and the philosophy that fails to do so must give place to the philosophy that does. 'We shall not rest,' as one writer puts it, 'until we find a God who will satisfy our religious needs as well as our scientific and rational aspirations.'<sup>1</sup>

The question is not simply What can philosophy do with religion, but How shall religion influence

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Iverach, *Theism*, p. 258.

philosophy? Approach religion from within a philosophical theory, and the first question alone is answered. Begin with the independent expression of religion, and an answer to both is possible. Though, as Professor Eucken so constantly insists, philosophy is to be regarded as a part of life, its primary function is the explanation of life. Religion is a life itself. In a very real sense, therefore, religion is greater and more fundamental than philosophy, and the method that starts from the concrete expression of religion is more calculated to do it justice than any attempt to include religion in a mesh of metaphysical inferences.

In consideration of objections<sup>1</sup> against religious experience as the starting-point, the restriction already adopted has anticipated one that is frequently expressed: that religious experience, save in a most formal and attenuated sense possibly, is not universal. That is not claimed. If it were but the possession of one single person it would still be a fact, and a fact that needed explanation. Since we are controlled by majorities, not only politically but often philosophically, its significance would be disregarded with equanimity. Happily, however, as an empirical fact, religious experience is extensive enough to claim full consideration, and even if its more distinct expressions are selected for philosophical purposes, the fact that it is also experienced in various degrees by the large mass of mankind ought to secure for it the respect of the most rigid 'authority by majority' advocates.

<sup>1</sup> Certain objections have already been noticed in the chapter on *Personal Idealism*, pp. 297-305.

It is not suggested that the existence of religious experience in others will convince those who make no profession of experiencing it themselves. Theoretically, of course, every mind is amenable to correct reason. This assumption, upon which the Intellectualists base their superiority, is invariably disappointing in practice, for no theoretical system actually shows more of the cogency it claims than the empirical methods whose lack of cogency it despises. The advantage, therefore, is purely theoretical. Moreover, it is a dubious asset at that, because it works in both directions. He who is unconvinced by another's reasoning repudiates its truth, not only for himself, but for the reasoner also. He who is unconvinced by another's experience can only allege that it is meaningless for him, not for the experient, whilst the experient's own certainty must in some degree shake his scepticism.

The task of a philosophy of religious experience is therefore not that of formulating reason-compelling arguments for religion, but simply to interpret its data—the experience of religious minds. It may develop a doctrine of God and man, but it starts with the modest desire to explain given psychological and historical fact. If it effects that it will be satisfied, but it will regard no challenge as touching it save this, that it has not dealt faithfully with its data. Those who desire that religious philosophy should provide a logic to convert professional metaphysicians will doubtless regard this as a *petitio principii*, whilst the empirically minded will retort upon them with an *ignoratio elenchi*. Apart from fallacy-flinging, the difference



between the two is primarily methodological and subsequently consequential, and as such it must be left to be decided by the practical test of results.

The method of construction that is here adopted is therefore expository rather than critical. The previous types that have been surveyed have been criticized rather than defence of itself, and of the requirements it believes religion demands than with the purpose of showing that they are intrinsically unsound, and must be exchanged for a more rational theory. Consequently, it is to be hoped that it has gained something from each to aid it in its own interpretative work. The debt is so large and so general that no full acknowledgement can be given, but much will be obvious as the interpretation proceeds. To name one factor out of many in each case, Schleiermacher's insistence upon feeling, Lotze's doctrine of divine personality, Ritschl's use of value-judgements, the Hegelian conception of the transcendent force by which religion raises man above himself, the mystical emphasis of the intimacy of religious experience, Martineau's Liberalism, and Professor Eucken's Activism, all contribute their quota. To Pragmatism its debt is greater still, for its method is pragmatic in character, though a philosophy of religious experience is not bound to the general standpoint of Pragmatism, especially as regards its insistent Humanism, which is too strongly marked to be adopted without qualification in a philosophy which deals with God and man. Personal Idealism affords a religious philosophy upon a more artificial foundation, but

with not a little similarity of result. If, in the working out of the implications of religious experience, development should proceed on idealistic lines, the resemblance will be still closer. Such a development is neither forbidden by nor involved in the starting-point chosen, and its adoption must be left to be decided by other considerations. Psychology and history, however, are essential; without them the unaided powers of introspection and observation alone remain, and it is almost certain that an exclusive reliance upon these will work out misleading results. The science of religion, to the utmost of its ability, must first prepare the groundwork. Upon these lines some attempt must now be made to interpret the natural implications of the religious consciousness. It need hardly be said that no claim to completeness is here advanced. What follows must be regarded as suggestions, tentative and experimental, towards the requirements demanded by and the lines necessary to a philosophy based on the fact of religious experience.

Before passing to consider its implications, a few words concerning the general nature of religious experience may be added. The primary characteristic of all first-hand religious experience is its immediacy. Such immediacy suggests that the element which has the primacy in religion is feeling. The errors of dividing sharply between feeling, will, and reason, and of thinking that religion can be exclusively assigned to any one of the three, are so obvious that they need not be repudiated. At the same time, speaking generally, and therefore more or less roughly, the psychological analysis of

religious experience tends to lay the greatest stress upon feeling.<sup>1</sup> Not that feeling, as such, is religious, nor that the feeling of dependence, or any particular feeling, is exclusively *the* religious feeling; but rather that, whilst religion is an affair of all man's powers, involving a will to believe and a reason to express, its deepest roots strike down into the recesses of feeling, where, to quote Professor James's graphic phrase, 'we catch real fact in the making.'

Such an admission by no means involves the extreme conclusions that some critics profess to see in it. Religion is not thereby constituted an affair of mere subjective emotion, if only for the obvious consideration that feeling presupposes reference to an object, and the object of religious feeling is accordingly drawn into prominence by the very feeling itself. Nor can it be denied on the ground that thereby injustice is done to the demands of action, and that the recognition of the primacy of feeling in religion implies that religion will content itself with futile bursts of emotion. It is true that feeling may express itself without any issue in action. The paralysed feel without power of action, and a moral paralysis is sometimes the nemesis of indulgence in feeling without a corresponding practical outlet in action. But to decry the feeling element in religion upon this ground is utterly to ignore the fact that, normally, feeling is one of the greatest prompters of action, giving to it intensity and rescuing it from being merely mechanical. It is

<sup>1</sup> Cf. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 431 and 501.

well recognized by moralists that indulgence in sensual emotion is almost invariably the preparation of the sensual act, and pure religious emotion is bound either immediately and indirectly, or indirectly and subsequently, to prepare for an expression of itself in concrete action.

Religious experience finds its most appropriate expression in value-judgements. It has already been contended<sup>1</sup> that the full expression of a religion demands the employment of theoretical judgements also, and it has also been asserted that the division between the two kinds of judgement is not ultimate, but for practical purposes. The peculiar suitability for the purposes of religion that the value-judgement possesses lies in the fact that a direct value-judgement can only be made concerning that which is personally experienced. A religious philosophy which bases itself upon religious experience must lay greater emphasis upon those doctrines of religion which can be expressed in the direct value-judgements of personal experience than upon those which are the outcome of speculative considerations—on judgements concerning sin, for example, rather than upon judgements concerning the relation of personalities within the Godhead. The latter class of judgements may be neither unnecessary nor unsound, but are, by reason of their nature, secondary. Since, however, primary and secondary religious judgements may be passed upon the same subject, the full expression of religious truth is the harmony of both.

<sup>1</sup> Pt. I. ch. iii.

§ 2. *The Interpretation of Religious Experience.*(i) *Its Subject*

If experience, the basis of all philosophy, be taken in what may be called its raw state, from the common-sense standpoint of experience, as it is for the experient, it is realized as the experience of a self, and seems to imply the real existence of that self as a centre of experience. The moment such a seemingly innocent statement is made, however, the hosts of Hume and the philosophical progeny of Intellectualism pounce upon it, either to resolve the self into its own experience or to smother it in the Absolute. It is evident, therefore, that whoever would regard the self as real must walk warily.

Primarily, it must be understood, the reality of self does not imply that the self has a conscious conception of its selfhood, nor must a fully developed philosophical doctrine of the soul or of personality be smuggled in under this plea. In its lowest terms the reality of self involves the basis from which personality and the fuller selfhood develop; that is to say, the feeling of self and being for self (*Fürsichsein*) from which it is no more possible to escape than to jump off one's shadow. Bound up with it is the realization of not-self. Self may exist, but it cannot be defined or even be realized apart from its distinction from not-self. A consistent solipsist could not possibly be aware of his own solipsism. Apart from any question as to the nature of the self or the not-self, the two stand together as the *sine qua non* of experience.

It may be well to anticipate here certain other misconceptions. 'The child' and 'primitive man'—those favourites of earlier and later psychology respectively—it will be urged, realize their 'self' at a comparatively late stage: modern pathology also has forbidden dogmatism upon this subject by the revelation of strange cases of multiple personality. Still further, at what point is the line to be drawn up or down creation? How far down the animal world does the sense of self extend? If, as recent investigations seem to suggest, there is something akin to consciousness in certain plants, where can any halt be made?

The first objection has already been met in some degree by the distinction between the notion and the feeling of self. The child is a being-for-self before self-consciousness may intelligibly be said to exist. Some self-feeling must be incipient from the commencement of independent life, and is very early manifested. Cases of multiple personality affect the doctrine of personality rather than the existence of self-feeling. Each personality,  $M_1$ ,  $M_2$ ,  $M_3$ , as the case may be, possesses, while it lasts, its own self-feeling. As regards the third objection, and in this respect also as regards the first, no hard-and-fast line need be drawn. It would be simply an exercise in psychology. The present issue is concerned with human experience where the sense of self exists unimpeachably.

Objections from the metaphysical standpoint, however, may seem more serious. The only possible way of refuting them logically is by a counter-argument equally metaphysical, and to adopt that



standpoint is to give up the common-sense assumption which formed the starting-point—the assumption of the self as a real centre of experience. What must therefore be done is to offer some justification for the course adopted, and ask whether the metaphysical veto has power to prohibit it.

As Mansel remarks, 'it is from the intense consciousness of our own real existence as persons that the conception of reality takes its rise in our minds.'<sup>1</sup> If this be so, it seems strange to insist that, although doubtless we exist in some sense, the primary source of our sense of reality is itself unreal, and that what is real is the Absolute, which is realized only by a violent effort of thought, and even then is so vague that its chief *raison d'être* seems to be that it serves as a lumber-room to receive all contradictions, with a useful assurance that in its twilight all cats are grey and all contradictions harmonized. Mr. Bradley and his fellows arrive at this paradoxical result by a process of reasoning which, if sound, should convince whoever can comprehend it. Fellow metaphysicians, however, whilst they may agree in evaporating the self, by no means agree with Mr. Bradley's method of doing so, but prefer methods of their own. Those who assume the reality of the self as a centre of experience may therefore take courage because of the differences amongst their opponents. Moreover, even if their own postulate is denied, they are in no worse case than the metaphysicians, who, whilst denying it, are equally busy in denying the postulates of their fellows. Surely, then, the right provisionally to assume it remains, until it can be shown to

<sup>1</sup> *Bampton Lecture* iii.



be false by its results, or until a better construction, gaining something more near to general assent, can be produced by the opposition. Still further, it will be noted that those who most strenuously deny the reality of selfhood deny it as themselves selves, and act as selves otherwise. Surely one of the strangest paradoxes in philosophy is that any metaphysical construction, always debatable even among metaphysicians, can override that which is acted upon in practice by all, even by those who deny it in theory !

No doubt some one will say this is a sheer relapse upon common sense and rule of thumb. Possibly it is only our inveterate artificiality in philosophy which regards such a statement as an objection. But, it will be retorted, upon the same grounds you may accept the common-sense belief in the reality of independent 'things.' The cases are, however, by no means parallel. The fundamental conviction of reality does not come from the existence of 'things,' but from self-existence. That implies necessarily a not-self. When Idealism disposes of naïve realism it does not dispose of the existence of that which is not-self. When the idea of independent 'things' vanishes no primary conviction goes with it. Instead of 'matter,' 'not-self' remains; but when the fundamental sense of self is denied reality a primary conviction is outraged.

It is not suggested that metaphysical scepticism concerning the self can be refuted in this way. All that is claimed is the right to ignore the veto of metaphysics upon those who choose as their assumption this common-sense ground. The absolutist

philosopher professes a whole-hearted devotion to experience. He proceeds to inspect it with the aid of a canon which is declared self-evident, but one that is actually an assumption pure and simple—that the self-contradictory *in the logical sense* (a qualification generally omitted) is the unreal. A subtle display of contradictions by an ingenious method of logic-chopping disposes of everything in general and particular, and, by a transposition of the canon, the real is said to be the non-contradictory. If it is asked what is left, the reply is, All. The sum of all contradictions is a non-contradiction. It is the Absolute, and is, is, is. Lay hold of any part of it, and you have appearance merely. The whole you cannot grasp, but it is. In reality Absolutism is like Solipsism. It is incapable of strict proof or disproof. If one says it is, it is. But it seems a sorry result, after a course of withering scepticism, to turn *volte-face* and declare that everything is 'somehow' in the Absolute and therefore guaranteed. The Vedantic Brahma, which is All, and yet can only be described by saying *Neti, neti* ('It is not, it is not'), would seem the best colleague of the Western Absolute. No doubt the above description would be repudiated by any Absolutist, but it is difficult to say that it is not a fair representation of Absolutist philosophy, as it appears to those untouched by its seductions.

Instead, therefore, of assuming that the real can only be reached by the paradoxical procedure of following the path of the unreal, the assumption that is here made is that the real is given in the self which experiences. It may have seemed a long and

laboured process to arrive at what to most minds seems a truism, but this assumption (it is not claimed as more) needed to be guarded against the assumption of the Absolutist (which does claim to be more). If our self, together with all its experience, is appearance, neither Mr. Bradley nor any one else has shown how we can rise above it to reality, or be conscious of any real, other than the unreal, which on this showing would be the real. But if the self is the primary reality it can judge experience. All experience claims to be real, and in a certain sense is so. We lay tests, however, upon it, and accept as validated that which can satisfy these tests. It may be possible, as the pragmatists urge, to make reality, but the making of reality implies a given material and a self that discriminates amongst it. If the self is real it can perform this function and actually deal with reality, but not otherwise. Such is assumed here to be the case, and, for the reasons given, the metaphysical objections may be passed by as intrinsically inconclusive.

What, then, is this self to be regarded as implying? For the purposes of psychology it is sufficient to regard it as a *thought which is appropriative*, the thought of the moment but the heir of all previous states of consciousness. However sufficient this may be for the external purpose of purely scientific psychology, it forms no argument against the religious conviction of the self as a soul, or spirit.

Earlier empiricism identified the soul with the series of changing states of consciousness. Since it has been recognized that a series is not the consciousness of a series, the ground has been shifted

to a series of which each member carries in its bosom the result of all that has gone before. Clearly this conception arose therefore as a working dodge, to avoid an objection, and serve the same purpose of getting rid of the 'soul'; equally clear is it that the conception can afford no explanation why or how each thought should possess such power as regards its predecessors. If it is said that it does, it is a gratuitous assertion, which may be allowed as a psychological hypothesis, but cannot be used as an argument to invalidate the existence of a spiritual principle within man.

Really, however, the appropriative thought is a soul without the name; it is the assumption that thought is unified without the assumption of a principle of unity, the assumption of correlations without a ground of correlation. There is no evidence to show that thought is self-revealing, at once subject and object. Unless the distinction between the existence of a thought and the knowledge of a thought is denied—and there is no ground for so doing—there is no reason for asserting that a thought can think. The thought implies the thinker.

No doubt the dubious metaphysical and religious notions that have encrusted the conception of the soul, and not the facts of the case, are responsible for this desire for psychology without a soul. There is no reason to force the soul upon psychology if it can do better without it, but equally there is no reason for psychology to offer objection to the soul which is necessary to the wider, and not merely scientifically specialized, region that religion inhabits.

The appropriative thought, like Emerson's 'I am the doubter and the doubt,' is the thinker and the thought. It offers the same attractions, and fails for the same reason. Pantheism in the macrocosm and a Pannoetism in the microcosm swallow up alike the mind that refutes and the mind that accepts. Both are therefore, strictly speaking, outside the range of argument, and consequently outside the range of conviction.

Professor James, discussing 'The Compounding of Consciousness,'<sup>1</sup> gets into difficulties over the soul, and ends by asking permission to leave it out, suggesting that possibly some day the soul may come to its own again by reason of some future pragmatic consideration. I do not venture to suggest any consideration which would make the soul necessary to psychology for compounding states of consciousness, but to comprehend man on any other than a merely sensationalistic basis it is necessary to assume a spiritual principle within. The only alternative is pure Naturalism. It would be a very gratuitous dualism to arrive at the belief in the reality of selfhood, on the one hand, and the existence of a spiritual principle, or soul, on the other, and hold them apart; and it may therefore be concluded, since no reason exists for distinguishing them, that the self and the soul are one.

The first result, therefore, of the examination of religious experience is that the assumption of the reality of the self which experiences may be justified. For the purpose of philosophy the experience of self is taken as equivalent to the consciousness of self

<sup>1</sup> *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 207 seq.

though the two are not precisely identical. Philosophy's task is to interpret that consciousness, and similarly, for the present purpose, the task of religious philosophy may be understood to be the interpretation of the religious consciousness.

§ 3. *The Interpretation of Religious Experience.*  
(ii) *Its Object*

If the question be now asked, 'What is the most primary and general feature of religious experience?' one reply, that of Professor James, has been already noticed, viz. 'an uneasiness and its solution.' Concerning the latter, however, he remarks, 'The solution is a sense that we are *saved from the wrongness* by making proper connexion with the higher powers.'<sup>1</sup> In these last words, 'proper connexion with the higher powers,' a feature even more primary than the sense of uneasiness, it seems to me, is disclosed. The uneasiness would hardly be apparent unless some sense of mal-adjustment with those powers first manifested itself, thus leading to the search for a better connexion and solution. As well as being more fundamental, it also avoids possible objections regarding the universal existence of such uneasiness. The primary and most general feature of religious experience, therefore, may be stated in semi-philosophical terms as the sense of relation between self and that which, whilst not-self, is higher than self.<sup>2</sup> This, I believe, is practically if not absolutely universal. However dimly the

<sup>1</sup> *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 508.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Introductory chapter, p. 5.



object of this relation may be conceived in primitive mentalities, amongst even the comparatively higher as well as the developed consciousness with which the present investigation is concerned, it is identified as God, or gods.

In future, therefore, the object of the religious consciousness may be spoken of as gods, or God. Despite Professor James's reminder that, technically, Polytheism may serve this purpose of religion as well as Theism, the day has not yet come when a polytheistic interpretation deserves serious consideration, and formally to refute it would be mere waste of space. Dealing with the clearest expressions of the religious consciousness, it may therefore be claimed that the fundamental psychological fact of religion is that throughout history, and at the present time, an extremely large number of individuals claim a sense of relation to an object of experience higher than themselves, which they identify as God—for if the term 'God' means anything, it means, to the religious, this. That the belief is genuine is avouched by the only possible canon of genuineness in belief, that it is acted upon, and so acted upon that the whole life is influenced and the course of history shaped by it. Whatever judgement may be passed upon this fact, it remains a truth of the first importance, and demands a consideration commensurate with its extent and influence.

It has already been admitted <sup>1</sup> that it is precarious to rely upon any supposed common intuitive *knowledge* of God. The conception of God in most minds

<sup>1</sup> Part I. ch. ix. p. 304.



is allied with various processes of thought, being the idea in which many phases of the mind's activity culminate. Rationally the conviction may be that God is the First Cause and Architect of the universe, morally He may be viewed as the Author of moral law, aesthetically as the ground of the beautiful—and so forth. All these conceptions are identified with the Higher Order, or Power, experienced in religious feeling, and it is almost impossible to separate the deliverances of the religious consciousness from the influence of these confluent conceptions. But even if it is difficult to prove the intuitive character of any part of our knowledge of God, belief in God is not based merely on the strength of an inference. Just as the chain of inference is not suspended from the air, but all inference at last resort depends upon some non-inferred knowledge, so does inferred knowledge concerning God go back to what is directly felt in experience. As such experience is subjective, it is impossible to dogmatize, but the vast bulk of the evidence seems to me to support those who contend that the experience gives directly the sense of God.

If it should still be demanded that the idea of God is inferred from, not given in, this experience, it is simply tenacity for a technicality. The Idealist who contends that the existence of one's friend is an inference, would admit that this is only realized by a certain effort of philosophical abstraction. In the same way God is manifest to religious experience so vividly and directly, in many cases at least, as to appear as our friend's existence appears—an intuitive certainty. The most rigid inferentialist must admit

that the religious experience of God is not of a being whose existence is inferred by an abstract process of thought, or even from the ordinary course of experience, but from a special and commanding spiritual experience. Belief in God and worship of Him has nothing whatever to do with this philosophical dispute. Moreover, if the existence of God were the most logical inference imaginable, and that only, it would never produce one particle of the feeling, enthusiasm, and sacrifice religion has ever manifested. One writes a treatise on inference, but does not live and die for it. The strength of the God-idea has nothing to do with the manner in which it is elaborated, but lies in its direct power in the heart.

For the present purpose it is a matter of indifference whether the idea of God be intuitive or inferred. If there is any reason to denote an experience as religious it is because, dimly or clearly, felt or comprehended, the experience refers to a higher power and its relation to the experient. In the more inchoate expressions of religious experience the object is hardly to be said to be consciously realized ; but it is none other, and with fuller development will be seen to be the same as that of the maturer experiences which speak without hesitation of this higher power as God.

#### § 4. *Further Characterization of Religious Experience : Personality*

To sum up what has been said, it may be alleged that what I may call the net result of the examina-

tion of religious experience yields, as its essential features, a self (which involves not-self) as a centre of experience, and that which is higher than self, but in relation to it. Apart from these fundamentals there is no reason to speak of an experience as being religious. Reasons have been given for treating the self as real, in other words as it seems to be, and for speaking of the higher-than-self as God. It is unreasonable to demand that religious philosophy shall begin below the stage where the object of experience is identified as God. Philosophy may be based upon experience, but it cannot begin till experience is clarified and coherent. The rudimentary stages of experience are accessible only to psychology and anthropology. It is as impossible to have a religious philosophy until there is religious thought as it is to have a logic or a metaphysic until there is definite thought for its basis. As soon as religious thought exists it centres itself round the two ideas of God and the experient, and at this stage only is it possible to begin the construction of a religious philosophy.

It is therefore necessary to draw a line above and below the starting-point of a philosophy of religious experience. Below the line will be religious experience not yet developed to the stage of distinctness, above it are those conceptions of God and the self attained by purely philosophical or metaphysical considerations. 'God' may be a purely intellectual conception, a name for primary or ultimate reality. 'God' in the sense in which the term is here employed means, however, the consciously experienced object of religious experience.

The task of religious philosophy is primarily the explanation of the relations of God and the self. Secondly it will deal with that not-self which is identified with nature and other like minds, or centres of experience. The present discussion must, however, be limited to the former task, and concern itself with God and self.

A somewhat closer characterization of the two is now needed. Hitherto the self has been regarded in strictly net terms. Its essence is to be for itself, but man is more than a being-for-self—he is a personality. Selfhood is a given fact, personality is an attainment. Selfhood is an absolute existence, personality is an ideal. Its attainment is largely, almost solely, by intercourse with other selves, and in the religious sense by intercourse with God. Selfhood is an individual fact, personality belongs to a wider sphere in which the self joins with other selves. The matter may be illustrated by reference to a somewhat similar state of things as regards knowledge. Primarily, reality is given as the individual subject's experience; but for any one save a Solipsist this is not all. We admit knowledge of other selves, of the ideas of otherselves. Strictly, of course, we can only know other selves as they are for us, by interpretation of our own ideas, not as they are for themselves. We have no doubt that we can share the ideas of others, even though it is obvious that the common idea, as it is for us, is not as it is for the others. It seems, therefore, inevitable to conclude that there is a partial similarity or identity of experience, whether it can be philosophically explained or not. To invoke a universal

consciousness does not relieve the difficulty, for as Dr. Rashdall admirably says<sup>1</sup>: 'Even if this theory helped to explain how the universal self knows the particular self, and the particular self the universal self, it would not explain how one particular self knows another particular self. . . . It seems to me an ultimate part of our experience that, from our self-knowledge, we do by inference infer the existence of other selves which are for themselves as well as for us; and philosophy has nothing to do but to record and systematize the way we actually think.' That is to say, the problems of epistemology start from the examination of the actual facts of our knowing; and it seems indeed a poor expedient to attempt to discredit these facts because of the inadequacy of our explanation of them. The advice of Descartes that it is wise not to pull down our house until we have built another, is counsel that some of our metaphysicians would do well to remember.

As with the knowledge of self and other selves, so with selfhood and personality. The essence of self is to know itself and be for itself, but none the less it is joined to a wider sphere than that of its own individuality where it shares the experience of others. At the basis of personality is strict individuality, being-for-self; but the expression of personality, as well as its attainment, is found in the common life that self shares with selves.

A clear recognition of this fact will avoid much confusion. At the basis of personality there is a unit, a fixed quantity—selfhood. Emphasis upon

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Idealism*, pp. 388, 389.

that alone would end in something perilously like Solipsism. We are, however, able to pass beyond it, and in gaining personality actually do so. At the same time, to emphasize the common element to the neglect of the individual is to make personality impersonality. Unless it is the development of our own essential selfhood, we do not find but lose ourselves in personality. Man's nature is both given and acquired ; it is a fact and an ideal. It could not be an ideal if it were not a fact, nor a fact if it were not an ideal.

Ascribing personality to self, there need be no hesitation in ascribing it also to God. Lotze at least has removed the chief stumbling-blocks out of the way of this course, and it will not be necessary to repeat what was said in that connexion. The very existence of the religious relation between the self and God as a communion seems to imply the divine personality. Communion or fellowship has no meaning except as between persons,<sup>1</sup> and the influence of religion on character suggests the influence of personality on personality. Incidentally it may be added religious communion, implying a Personal God, could not be imagined as existing between an Absolute and selves. The Absolute might be the communion of spirits, but it would be the bond of communion merely, not in communion itself.

<sup>1</sup> It is true that we speak of communion with nature, but this is a figurative expression made possible only by personifying nature. It is no more possible to commune with nature as the embodiment of power, law, or as an ideal, than it is to commune with a steam-engine, bimetalism, or the 'right to work.'



Religious philosophy may, therefore, be understood to deal with the relations of a Person to persons. From the standpoint that has been outlined, the relation and knowledge of God to selves will have similarities with and differences from the relation and knowledge of selves to selves. The difference will lie in this, that whilst the relation of self to selves is one of equality, the relation of the self to God is one of dependence, and whilst the knowledge that one self has of another is limited, the knowledge that God has is complete. It is needless to reiterate also the obvious fact that the relation of Creator to created is not the same as that of the created amongst themselves. On the other hand, there is this similarity: however fully we may know others, we do not know them as they know themselves; know them, that is to say, so as to *be* them. To press the religious conception of God's perfect knowledge in such a way that it implies that God knows us as if He were us is to produce sheer Pantheism. God cannot know us as He knows Himself. Our true personality may come to us by rising into and sharing the life of God, and our knowledge of God may increase indefinitely, and God's knowledge of us may be conceived without limit, save that it is not so conceived as to lose the identity of the self in God. As knowledge of other selves implies some identity of experience, so must it be between God and those made in His image and likeness; yet God's being-for-self, and our own being-for-self, are ultimate and unconfusable.

It seems to me, therefore, that a philosophy of



religious experience will not be either radically monistic or entirely pluralistic, but may tend rather to the latter alternative. The 'plain man' is always an unconscious pluralist, the philosopher almost as inevitably a professed monist. Pluralism is, however, losing some of its philosophical disrespectability and issuing a serious challenge to Monism. The admission of the existence of separate selves forbids absolute Monism, which is but Pantheism writ large.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, an eternal pluralism of God and souls, as regards a co-existence antecedent to this life, seems foreign to the ordinary religious consciousness, which is strongly impressed with the idea of creation. It is not an impossible conception, but one that is difficult to entertain and to work with. Many of the more 'tender-minded' monists make earnest endeavours to guarantee an ultimate Monism as the end of all things. The real problem of Monism is not, however, to collect all souls into God, but to account for the disintegration of absolute Monism into Pluralism. If that could be explained it might be possible to guarantee an ultimate Monism, but since it is not, ultimate Monism can never be more than a hypothesis or a hope. On the other hand, the objections to Pluralism are aesthetic rather than rational. Pluralism works well. Monism seems, to many minds, an absolute essential of thought; but it is none the less a comparatively artificial requirement. Working science proceeds comfortably with dualism, and it is not necessary,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. in this connexion the contentions of Prof. Howison against Prof. Royce in *The Conception of God*, p. 90.

for practical purposes, that more should be demanded. I am willing to be retrospectively a Monist so far as acknowledging one sole ultimate Cause can be called Monism, and prospectively, too, if the hope of an ultimate harmony of will and unity of fellowship between all souls and God be reckoned Monism—though I fear radical Monists will scorn this olive branch; but, for the present purpose of giving an interpretation to religious experience, the monistic assumption is not essential. The significance of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity would seem to be, philosophically at least, that it provides a differentiation within the absolute unity of God, and therefore a possible ground for intelligibly speaking of God as Love, since to Love without an object, like the eternal self-love of Spinoza's God, it is misleading to apply the term 'love' in its usual connotation; and yet God is supposed to be love by nature, not only in act. If a differentiation within unity is possible, if the Trinity is an intelligible conception, it may be possible to hope for a similar 'monistic' relation between the Trinity and souls which yet remain beings-for-self, but are bound in unity with the Trinity, or God. But as such a beatific union does not yet appear, our Pluralism remains actual, our Monism an ideal.

§ 5. *Further Characterization of Religious Experience : Freedom and its Relation to God and Time*

Philosophy naturally starts from a stage where men trust the veracity of their common-sense

convictions. Since, however, its inquiry into the rationale of these convictions does not always result in endorsing that trust, a new starting-point comes into being, and they are regarded from the attitude of philosophic doubt. The question, accordingly, is assumed to be simply this: whether philosophy will relent somewhat, and grant some protection to the beliefs of the unsophisticated intellect. Particularly has this been the case with regard to freedom. The average man assumes his freedom unquestioningly, determinist and libertarian alike speak and act as if they were free; but when the question is debated philosophically, it is customary to take for granted the deterministic postulate of science, and merely to endeavour to beg a parcel of ground somewhere within man's spiritual nature for the religious, ethical, and common-sense postulate of freedom.

I venture to suggest that the attitude is unfortunate. In the first place both determinism and freedom are postulates, a fact often overlooked with regard to the former—which is frequently treated as an indubitable scientific certainty. Why, therefore, should it not be as permissible to start from one postulate as from the other, especially since the conviction of freedom is both simpler and historically earlier than the conviction of necessity? This course has already been adopted with regard to the reality of self, which was accepted as a postulate of experience and subsequently maintained because it was suggested that metaphysical objections to its reality were not such as to inhibit it. The same course will, therefore, be chosen as

regards freedom, on the ground that it is both natural and advisable to trust one's primary convictions until they are clearly shown to be untenable, and to start any inquiry as to their veracity, not from the position of mistrust raised by previous inquiries, but more fairly and judicially *de novo*.

It is not, however, proposed to retrace here the path of inquiry already trampled hard by so many feet. The very fact that the question is still open attests the indecisiveness of the battle. To those who will not identify epistemology with metaphysics, or admit that mere rationality is the sole criterion of truth, it is possible not to be unduly disturbed by the admittedly powerful rejoinders of determinism. It may not be a counsel of despair to regard the question as psychologically insoluble. Freedom is a moral and religious postulate, and choice between it and the scientific postulate of necessity can only be made on voluntary grounds. Here, therefore, the fact of freedom may be assumed as a moral and religious conviction.<sup>1</sup>

The more important question, therefore, is not the psychology or possibility of freedom, but the adjustment of the idea of freedom with the other beliefs of the religious consciousness. It must be asked what effect it will have upon the conception of God. Does it necessitate the view that God's consciousness is in time, and is man's freedom a limit to God's omnipotence and omniscience?

It is necessary to deal with these questions,

<sup>1</sup> A forcible defence of this attitude is afforded by Prof. James, *Principles of Psychology*, vol. ii. pp. 572-4.

particularly the former. Few matters need more imperatively to be faced in religious philosophy than the question of what should more strictly be called the time-process, but is often more loosely denoted simply as time. The language of religion drops in and out of 'time' and 'eternity' in a manner which, were it not familiar, would be regarded as appalling, and seldom makes any effort honestly to define the terms. Time is treated as a localized piece of eternity, the 'straddle-edge' of the present with eternity behind and before it, yet eternity is defined as the absence of all time relations. Moreover, it is sometimes said that the process of time must be translated or transcended into eternity, which, if it means anything, means the destruction of all the significance of events in time, for they thus appear never to have been in any intelligible sense a process at all.

Starting from man's experience as it seems for him to be, it is natural to regard the time-process as the self and freedom were regarded, as real. That our consciousness is manifested in time, and that we can only think in terms of time, is evident. It would seem, therefore, that the time-process were part of our original datum, with as good a claim to reality as any other part of our experience. The metaphysician, however, riddles the conception of time with verbal contradictions, and concludes that the consciousness of God, and indeed all reality, is timeless. The strange part of it is that he thereby neither explains nor dismisses our experience of the time-process, nor gives the slightest hint as to what may be understood by a notion so

foreign to our minds as a timeless consciousness. It is, therefore, perfectly admissible to avoid the metaphysical debate, and, whilst admitting that the conception of time is in many ways a difficult one, ask none the less whether it is possible to deal with the time-relation as real.

Several reasons impress its reality upon the religious consciousness. In the first place religious experience, upon which it is attempted to base religious philosophy, is in time. If the task were to construct an ideal world, without reference to the actual world, time might be banished on the ground of the various contradictions involved in our apprehension of it. The task, however, is to deal, as well as may be, with the actual facts as they appear to us, and to afford an explanation, not only rationally possible, but such as to satisfy all our needs and meet all the data. Religious philosophy has not to create, but to apprehend its data, and time-sequence is one of them. If by getting rid of it we neither explain it nor understand what is meant by a timeless reality, is it not as well to consider whether the reality of the time-process cannot be at any rate a possible hypothesis?

In the second place, the creation of souls in time, the only alternative to an eternal pluralism, is the general conviction of the religious consciousness. I do not say it is inevitable, but all the indications seem to point to it. Thirdly, the personal and ethical conviction of freedom insistently demands the reality of time-relations. A human free will and a timeless relation to God

are incompatibles, and either the absolute timelessness of God, or the creative power of the human will, must be given up. The question, therefore, is more than the reality of the time-process for us; it involves the further question whether God, or at least shall it be said the relation between God and man?—is in time. To say God foreknows without fore-ordaining is useless. Apart from the fact that the very phraseology is a covert reference to time, foreknowledge implies fore-ordination, as Martineau has insisted. Only that which is certainly fore-ordained can be certainly foreknown. Foreknowing is not forecasting. If the will is free its determinative choices are creations, which are not, until at a certain point in time they come to be. If time-sequence is unreal, so are they; if God is wholly out of time, they are eternally present to Him. Lastly, the sense of the reality of religious experience seems also to demand the reality of time-relations. The religious life appears as a progressive realization. To remove it from time is to change its felt nature. It becomes an eternally fixed relation, neither process nor progress.

The question of space, usually treated with that of time, it will not be necessary to take into account. The relation of God to man need not involve it, for thought, will, and feeling occupy no space, but are unrealizable apart from a process with its 'then' and 'now'; that is to say, from time. The creation of spirits, their volitions, their relation to the Creator, can be treated apart from the question of space, but not apart from the question of time. The latter, therefore, is



the more fundamental, and to it attention will be confined.

The various devices adopted to smooth over the time difficulty do not give much help. To say, for example, that God grasps the world in a single thought, as a bar of music, in reality a complex of sounds, is grasped by the mind as a unity, simply shows that the human mind can lay hold of a very short duration of time as a unit, which none the less could be infinitely divided into lesser durations. It does not explain a timeless relation. It will not be necessary to do more than note the various senses in which the term 'time' is employed: subjective, objective, and conceptual. Neither will it be necessary to ask what time is. Empty time, represented as a real existence, cannot be conceived.<sup>1</sup> Time is only realized by us as a relation between objects. Instead, therefore, of asking what time is, or assuming that it has an independent existence, the question may be narrowed to this: What does time mean? and the answer will be seen to be that time is not significant merely as a process from past to present and future, but rather that it serves to differentiate within experience, for there would be no meaning to the statement that things exist in time if there were not some differentiation between them that would not exist if they were not in time. Space—and time is most frequently conceived by reference to metaphors derived from space—serves a similar function, but affords a differentiation of another character.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lotze, *Metaphysic*, Eng. trans., bk. ii. ch. iii. § 140. The whole chapter should be read.

Time, however, as we realize it, is determined for us by the imperfect powers of memory wherein the past is a fading twilight. Our time apprehensions are marked by change, breaks, and decays, and by the action of matters and persons external to us. It is, therefore, usually ruled out at once as regards God's consciousness. Yet the reason is not apparent. As Professor James vigorously asserts, 'Is not, however, the timeless mind rather a gratuitous fiction? And is not the notion of eternity being given at a stroke to omniscience only just another way of whacking upon us the block-universe, and of denying that possibilities exist?—just the point to be proved.'<sup>1</sup>

So far as God's own consciousness is concerned, even if it be regarded as differentiated, the time-relation would not be as it is for us. To a Being the sole cause of His own experience there would not be a past or future in the same way as we comprehend the terms. For, in the first place, all His experience may be imagined as equally present, and in so far as completely to know the cause is to know the effect, as simultaneously present. But if man is a free agent there is an experience of which God is not the sole cause, and a creative power at work upon reality which is not God's, even if it be leased from Him. Since, therefore, God has created souls which have a being for themselves apart from His, and those souls' consciousness is in time, it seems inevitable to regard time, though not in the limited sense in which it appears to us, as a form of His consciousness. If it be assumed that man makes

<sup>1</sup> *Will to Believe*, p. 181 footnote.

reality, such reality as a whole, it may be granted, is not the future to God as it is to man, until it is made, for God may know every possibility. Still, if man is free, what even God does not know is the choice which selects between these possibilities. In this sense, therefore, there seems to be a 'future' for God, and for this reason it seems necessary to regard God's consciousness as possessing something similar to the time-relation, something which serves some such function as time does for us.

If it should be said that this involves an endless regress, it might be enough to plead that a time-series beginning from timelessness is even more unthinkable. The endlessness of time, in itself, is not a contradiction. The contradiction only occurs when we endeavour to make a finite mental representation of it, to make a finite measure of an infinite series. The difficulty is largely one that arises from the human standpoint. An eternal movement is to my mind neither harder nor easier to conceive than a static eternity.

Although an endless regress is not unthinkable it causes certain objections. It may not be absolutely essential, however, to press the idea of a series as applied to God's experience. It helps perhaps with regard to creation in time, but that is not the most crucial point. It might be regarded not only as simultaneously viewed but as simultaneously present provided it were recognized that certain points were undetermined. But an experience which contains undetermined points, even if it knows every possibility those determinations may make actual, must be subject to something akin, at least,

to the time-relation. May it not be so? May not 'eternity' imply the absence of human time-relations, not the absence of anything like the time-relation at all? Just as the personality of God may be regarded as perfect and ours as imperfect, so may time as it is for God be in relation to time as it is for us. If God's consciousness is the consciousness of a personality, why should it be a point of honour to deny to it a form like ours? If our consciousness is conceived in the image and likeness of God, its form may symbolize His. If this is recognized it seems possible to meet the demand of the religious consciousness for real freedom. Deny it, and the alternative is to ignore the difficulty altogether—a frequent but not an heroic course, or to choose the only other way, which logically must end in a pantheistic Monism.

If any one wishes to retain human freedom and yet to declare of God's consciousness, 'Nevertheless, it does *not* move'—in time, I can neither reply nor understand. It seems to me no judgement of Solomon to cut the knot of an antinomy with a sword, and divide it between two conflicting claimants. The timelessness of God seems to some a religious necessity, yet it is not only a useless but an exceedingly difficult conception. To part with it is only objectionable to tradition, not to life, to philosophical prejudice that has soaked into religious thought, not to the religious consciousness. Even upon the most orthodox intellectualist suppositions a timeless reality must be such as can express itself in time, and if God can express Himself in time I can see no justifiable reason for deny-

ing that time can be a form of His consciousness, although realized in a manner not entirely the same as our own. If it should be desired to retain the timelessness of God's mind and yet admit that, in so far as He deals with man He expresses Himself in time, it would seem to me a desperate and by no means intelligible proceeding. Admittedly the urgency of the question of time as related to God lies in God's dealings with man, and we cannot speak of God's consciousness as it might be in itself apart from this; but if man contributes to God's experience, God's consciousness must possess some form similar to the form of time.

With regard to the further consideration—that to regard God as possessing an experience not fully determined limits Him—it will be frankly admitted that it is so. It is at least a self-limitation, however, not imposed by conditions other than He has created, and created, it is presumed, for a good that appears to Him. On every hand some limit is put to God's omnipotence. Absolute omnipotence is unthinkable; the absolutely unconditioned is the absolutely nothing. Omnipotence must, therefore, be regarded not as the power to do anything indifferently, but as the power freely to choose its own conditions. Even the Absolute has its limits: it cannot contradict itself. If there are logical impossibilities to the Absolute even, there is no reason to refuse to believe in impossibilities for God. If His omnipotence is limited, why not His omniscience? If the creation of spirits having independent life of their own is a limit to His omnipotence, is it unthinkable that His omniscience regarding them

is also limited? No doubt a certain vague feeling, misborn of reverence, shrinks from attributing to God anything like a human form of consciousness; but the alternative is either an unresolved mystery, or what this must in the end assuredly involve—a scepticism that denies that the nature of God is in any way like ours, that is to say, is unknowable.

To regard the lapse of events in time as real is necessary for any religious philosophy which views reality as still in the making, and man as sharing in that making. Time itself may be a purely mental construction, but the time-process and God's relation to man within it must be real. Only those who consider that philosophical insight consists in flouting every conviction of common sense will count it an objection that this view is the ordinary view of the religious consciousness. A further suggestion seems implied in the conclusion that God's consciousness views its experience under a form akin to the time-form of our consciousness. It points to the essentially similar nature of the human and divine. It is not the finite condition of man that distinguishes him from his Maker. Man's finiteness differs in extent from God's, and in the fact that it is imposed upon him. Yet God, working under conditions, not imposed, it is true, but self-chosen, thereby becomes limited also. In personality and in these conditions under which personality expresses itself human and divine nature are alike. It is as possible to speak of the 'humanity' of God as of the 'divinity' of man. The absolute distinction between God and man lies in one thing only—in sin.



§ 6. *The Expression of Religious Experience : Dogma*

Hitherto the religious consciousness has been considered in its subjective aspect. Although as a new creation in each soul, every religious experience is unique, an objectivity arises out of the very subjectivity itself, and in course of time may tend to dominate it.

Starting from subjective experience, religion cannot remain therein. However personal and even ineffable a man's religious experience may seem to him, he cannot shut it darkly within his own heart. The more real it is to him the more he will feel bound to communicate it. So doing, he must translate the gold of religious communion into the silver of speech, the common currency that passes in exchange amongst men. Yet his experience is his own ; words are common property. It is a translation that never does full justice to the original. None the less, until he does so his own experience is not made perfect, for the experience of others will not only modify his own but enable him the better to understand it. In course of time the ordinary process of selection fixes on certain crystallized forms which will in a greater or less degree be agreed upon by a number of men as serving to convey their inner experience, and these forms become dogmas. Dogmas primarily arose, as all other propositions arose, as explanations or valuations of experience. In gaining general assent they obtained an objective aspect, of which they have been very conservative, enforcing themselves upon a later age which no longer corroborated them



with its own subjective valuations, and hence the endless controversy that wages round dogmatic statements.

So far, therefore, from being a heaven-sent form to reveal heaven-sent truth, dogma is humanly made, and made for practical purposes. Primarily it is intended as an expression of the convictions of religious experience. It does not follow that a fixed dogma exactly expresses any one's personal experience. It is rather a sort of general or class name, a colour 'near enough' to match many shades of similar thought, a badge that denotes a company, and forms a basis for intercommunication. To say this does not dispense with the possibility of a divine element even in dogma. If it is the expression of an experience between the soul and God, it is a human attempt to set forth a divine truth, and the better the expression the more the divine truth is revealed therein.

It will be remembered that it was contended<sup>1</sup> that all judgements are at last resort value-judgements and that theoretical judgements represent consolidated value-judgements which can be employed apart from their original reference. In the same way, though the original matrix of dogma is in subjective experience, dogma has its objective aspect, and systems of dogma can be constructed and debated wholly apart from the original experience. Thereupon arises orthodoxy as the official and collective form of dogma, and heresy as its unofficial and individual expression. Orthodoxy and heresy are both necessary to dogma; orthodoxy to

<sup>1</sup> Part I. ch. iii.

preserve, heresy to ferment. By itself orthodoxy petrifies religious experience, heresy by itself dissolves it. It is by the opposition of the two that orthodoxy is kept progressive by assimilating heresy, and what is best in heresy preserved by its absorption into orthodoxy. A philosophy based on religious experience must recognize the right of heresy. The revelation of God to others is not necessarily more authoritative than that given to us, that we should always submit. None the less, we do well to compare our valuations with those that have stood, and proved themselves by, the test of time.

A further and not less cogent reason also contributes to the existence of dogma—the need of co-operation. Religion is never satisfied with passivity; it is essentially a mode of action, as well as a spiritual feeling. But alone man is helpless: to carry out the command of his religion, ‘Do,’ he must co-operate. For this he needs a basis of co-operation, an organization. This causes the establishment of churches to provide the organization of effort; but no organization stands upright without some vertebrae of rules, and dogma serves this purpose. In the privacy of his own experience each man may be a law unto himself; but, joining the commonwealth of service, he bears the burden of his citizenship, yet knowing that the citizen under law is more truly free than the brigand in his outlawry. This is, at least, a strong practical reason for the necessity of dogmatic expression. Whilst theoretically co-operation may not need rules, and churches without dogma exist often on paper, it has been found

practically impossible to cohere for work without some common and obligatory basis.

Dogma, therefore, is the price that religion must pay to satisfy the demands of its own nature—intercourse and co-operation. Personal religious experience can only realize its own implications by going out of itself and adopting dogmatic form ; but none the less, in a very true sense, in thus losing its life it finds it. At the same time, it follows that there is frequently some jarring in the looseness with which dogmatic expression fits personal experience ; yet even then it may be recognized that this sense of contradiction has been effective as a cause of doctrinal progress, and a constant stimulus to fresh and more adequate expressions.

If such a view of dogma should seem to fail in emphasizing the authority of doctrinal statements, none the less it acknowledges both their strength and necessity, demurring only when dogma becomes untrue to its original purpose, and, instead of expressing religious experience, tries to force religious experience into its set and authorized expressions. On the other hand, it is a view which allows of the necessary freedom of revision and restatement of dogma. It regards decayed doctrines neither as falsehoods nor as so much lumber for the scrap-heap, but as truths which need only a new focus. It relieves the problem of doctrinal standards by insisting that to re-read the doctrines of the past in the light of the present is neither to be false to the doctrines nor to those who framed them. Not to the doctrines, for to reset them nearer to the truth they are intended to convey is to preserve them.

Nor yet to those who framed them; they spoke for an age, not for all time, and it is a just compliment to them to assume that, did they live now, they would speak according to the standards of the age. So far, then, from there being any intellectual dishonesty in reinterpreting dogma, it may be claimed that it is the only faithful way of dealing with it. To fossilize a dogma is to be untrue both to its letter and to its spirit. Religious experience is eternal, its expression temporal, and a change of expression is the sign of life and progress.

Only, it may be added, such changes come best slowly and not by coercive methods. If religious experience grows out of its doctrinal expression, the former expression will be cast off by the gradual growth of that which succeeds it. Any attempt to create a wholesale dogmatic revolution in nearly every case will be found to arise, not from the development of experience, but from some particular theory which desires to coerce experience to its support, and the last state of things becomes worse than the first. Old dogmas are more likely to drop off like autumn leaves than to be exploded by the dynamite of a theological revolution.

### § 7. *The Religious Life : Conclusion*

The preceding analysis of religious experience may have seemed somewhat sterile. Its purpose, however, was not to afford or even outline a complete philosophy of religious experience, but to interpret the terms implied in the religious relation. Those terms were understood to be a real self as subject,

and God as its object. Together they form the minimal datum for a religious philosophy. The relation was further characterized as a relation between persons, and the immediate conviction of freedom was considered in its bearing upon the doctrine of God. It seemed necessary only to add a word or two on the objective aspect of the subjective experience to complete the essential portion of the task.

For the purely theoretical purpose of analysing religious experience to show that it affords a groundwork for religious philosophy, this is enough. The limitation to the lowest terms was further rendered advisable because it should be possible to show that any experience, properly to be called religious, implies these essential features, even though of course they need not be consciously recognized by the experient. The advantage of a widely inclusive basis, none the less, involves the gathering of the smallest common result, for it is obvious that the more heterogeneous the material the less must be the common factors.

It is not suggested, however, that such a characterization, limited for a special purpose, can do justice to religious experience in its concreteness. Although it will not be possible to enter into the latter, it seems necessary to acknowledge those further features of all religious experience in its higher forms, which indicate at once the subsequent problems of religious philosophy and the expression of the religious life. They may, I think, be summarized as follows. Religious experience is essentially social ; it issues in action, lives by faith, is bound up with love, and its bond between God and man is prayer.

Two great convictions are to be found in almost every developed religious experience—the sense of sin and pardon, and the belief in immortality. It is hardly possible to say more of religious experience, taken in general. When it comes to a question of the attributes of God, of the punishment of sin, of the nature of a future life, and so forth, one leaves the immediacy of personal religious experience, and enters into the doctrines or revelation afforded by the historical religions.

The social sense in religious experience is marked in a manner that cannot be understated. Its unity is stronger than class, race, or linguistic division, binding men to more than a common interest—to a common life. No wars have been more fierce than religious wars, no intolerance more uncompromising than religious intolerance. To say this is not wholly to reproach. At least, it witnesses to the binding force of religion, whose bonds are often tighter than blood-ties. It has already been recognized that religion is more than a feeling; it is a mode of behaviour. Action is the speech of religious feeling. Without it it is dumb, and cannot reveal itself. Psychologically, it is doubtful whether a religious feeling that was prevented from issuing in action could maintain itself. The freshness of the feeling is revived by action, and a feeling that fails to find such an issue loses in intensity at each repetition, until it becomes virtually unnoticed. It is notorious that those things which we can strive to avert or bring about affect us more powerfully than those towards which we can contribute nothing.

The importance of faith in religion is not, as the



intellectually-minded are wont to imagine, that it affords an excuse for belief in the intellectually unverifiable, but in that it is a dynamic of and tonic to the life of religion. Faith stands in the same relation to our intuitions as reason does to our logical convictions: it guarantees them, and faith, moreover, is the vehicle of religious inspiration. The religious genius is often great in intellect, but always great in faith, and the faith-qualities of a Luther or a Wesley leave a greater mark upon religion, even upon the doctrines of religion, than the ontology of an Anselm or the syllogisms of an Aquinas. The measure of inspiration and the limits of revelation are alike fixed by the faith-quality of the recipient.

Love cannot be omitted from consideration, because apart from it the external and regulative side of religion alone is possible. For religious communion, meditation, worship, for all the characteristics of the more developed religious experience, love is essential. If fear and adoration be regarded as the primitive religious emotions, love represents the triumph of adoration casting out fear. It is adoration become permanent and habitual, no longer spasmodic and intermittent, but grown from an emotion into a relation. In the same manner prayer, which at first is grossly petitionary, and prompted only by momentary needs, becoming habitual, develops into communion. Retaining its petitionary character, it none the less adds, 'Thy will be done.' Professor James, as it has been seen,<sup>1</sup> regards inflow of energy in the prayer-state

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Part II. ch. i. p. 320.



and the faith-state as a 'psychological fact. Apart from the psychologist's verdict, such is the invincible conviction of all religious experience. A religion without prayer is a contradiction in terms. Prayer is the speech of the soul.

It may seem perilous to conclude the characterization of concrete religious experience with reference to two topics so entangled in doctrinal questions as the sense of sin and release, and the hope of immortality. None the less, whilst some dogmas arise from historical revelation, others appear as directly experiential, and, apart from their historical and objective aspect, these doctrines seem to me to have a subjective ground in almost every religious experience. The fundamental character of the sense of sin has already been referred to.<sup>1</sup> It is the contrast effect which makes manifest the character of its opposite—communion and love. As regards immortality, whilst it is not possible to extract a doctrine of the subject from religious experience, nor to show that the hope of immortality is unquestionably found in every phase of it, even though it is virtually universal, it would seem none the less a conviction bound up with the very nature of the religious relation that it is neither passing nor casual, but one that partakes not of the temporality of the human partner, but of the everlastingness of the divine. It is this conviction which issues in dogmas of immortality.

Such would seem to be the general characterization of religious experience. It must, however, be studied not *in vacuo*, but in its concrete forms.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 387.

Foremost amongst historical religions stands Christianity, not merely foremost as the greatest, profoundest, and most universal religion, but in its claim to be the absolute religion. It would be wholly outside the scope of this survey to investigate that claim, but it should perhaps be repeated that the claim does not embarrass the method that has here been adopted of working upon religious experience in general.

For the purposes of comparative study, Christianity may still be classed side by side with other religions without thereby giving consent to the assumption that it is merely one amongst them. Similarly may religious philosophy deal with the common facts of religion without compromising the belief of any who should hold that the ideal of truth is given only in one religion. The claim that Christianity makes to absoluteness does not involve the refusal to see truth elsewhere, nor does it imply that all religious truth was given in those words of the Incarnate Christ which have been preserved amongst men. Its claim is that by a present and progressive revelation the Spirit of Truth shall give words which a former generation could not bear, and guide into all truth—the truth that ultimately shall be adequate for every need of man, if that may be thought to be the truth ideal.

So far, indeed, from prohibiting a philosophy based on religious experience, Christianity must be regarded as completing it. In itself the philosophy of religion neither is, nor can make, a religion. Historical evidence suggests that its Theism, if it does not find completion in Christianity, is likely

to tend increasingly to Pantheism. The ideal of a religious philosophy is not to perfect a construction detached from life, but expressed in life, and such an expression is found in that religion which is more than a code of laws or system of morals, which in its deepest meaning is life in God through Christ.

Such a life must be understood to be the final synthesis to which science, art, philosophy, and religion all tend. If the alliance of philosophy and religion, which has been the subject here, has helped to the understanding the one of the other, in doing this it has foreshadowed the ideal, when all man's needs and interests, his knowing, feeling, and willing, meet in the perfected union of the whole which includes and expresses all completely. Such an ideal, which is at once the goal and inspiration of man's endeavour, cannot better be expressed than by calling it the perfected religion, where the relation of man and the universe, of man and his Maker, is complete. The last word of all, then, is religion, and it is difficult to say what more could be understood by heaven.



APPENDIX  
SOME SUBSTITUTES FOR RELIGIOUS  
PHILOSOPHY



## SOME SUBSTITUTES FOR RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY

### 1. *Positivism*

ALTHOUGH the foregoing types of religious philosophy have no claim to absolute inclusiveness, it seems hardly possible in any case entirely to ignore at least three modes of thought which have served, during the period covered by this survey, and to some extent still serve, as substitutes for religious philosophy. Because they are substitutes it will not be necessary to delineate or discuss them at length, but merely to state some reasons why they are not to be regarded as *bona fide* types of religious philosophy.

The first of these is Positivism. No reference need be made to Comte's elaborately organized ritual of religion, which is now merely an historical curiosity. Apart from this ill-starred invention altogether, the Positivists, notable amongst whom is Mr. Frederic Harrison, still assert that Comte afforded not only a philosophy but a religion, and hence presumably Positivism is capable, in the eyes of its exponents, of affording a religious philosophy. Although Positivism may seem to be the abnegation of philosophy, in some sense of the term it is a



philosophy, but it cannot afford a religious philosophy simply because it cannot yield a religion.

The character of the religion which Positivism claims to afford is attractively set forth. It is asserted that it is the harmony of human life, collective and individual, the proper and concordant ordering of the relations of its several parts—heart, intellect, activity. So Mr. Harrison, who waxes indignant over what he regards as a popular caricature—that Positivism merely substitutes transfigured man for the deity. The religion of humanity, he declares, is not merely an emotion, nor a worship, nor is its object simply an ideal. It is a dominant force, transforming, guiding, and ordering human nature as a whole.

Be that as it may, it still remains that these high sentiments are pent within the range that Positivism dogmatically fixes as the only possible sphere of thought—the strictly anthropic. This restriction is in reality based upon the most slender of negative supports, which is nothing more than a somewhat petulant dissatisfaction with all man's attempts to transcend that sphere, and on no surer ground comfortably abandons the deepest and most perennial questionings of man. It is difficult to see how the progress the Positivist religion promises can be more than a merely material progress, when placed under such limits and discouraged by such vetoes. It is claimed, however, by Mr. Harrison that it is also intellectual and moral. None the less, all is upon the naturalistic basis, and such 'religion' as Positivism can offer, therefore, has nothing to do with any conception of a spiritual life. It is certainly some-

what strange to denote a glorified Naturalism as 'religion.'

In the next place, the object of this religion is humanity. Mr. Harrison keeps the object somewhat in the background, and emphasizes the effects, but the right of the effects to be regarded as religious must be gained from the object. In the minimum significance attached previously to the term 'religion,' the object was declared to be necessarily 'higher' than the worshipper.<sup>1</sup> Humanity, then, is higher than—what? The individual possibly. But Comte's sociology finds the universal subject, the subject, therefore, that exercises religion, not in man as a unit but in mankind. For mankind to worship humanity is like Philip drunk worshipping Philip sober. It is the respect of selves to selves, and is no more religion, or even worship, than is the toast drunk at a family dinner to prosperity of the family.

For Positivism, therefore, to have an opportunity to afford a religion it seems necessary not to press this principle stringently, and most Positivists speak as if the individual, or at least the present state of society, were the subject, and the object of worship, humanity, were a higher and deeper thing.

It need hardly be pointed out that there is no humanity apart from individual men and women, any more than there is—to quote the bantering remark of one of the critics<sup>2</sup>—'a great being apart from all individual dogs, which we may call Caninity,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Introductory chapter, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Dean Page Roberts.

or a transcendent Durham ox, apart from individual oxen, which may be named Bovinity.' Humanity is quantitatively greater than its worshippers, but to yield allegiance or worship to a majority, whilst it may be prudent, is not religious. If, on the other hand, humanity is said to be qualitatively higher than its worshippers, it seems a somewhat precarious assertion. Dealing with man in the mass, primitive, palaeolithic, prehistoric, troglodytes and trust magnates, saints and scoundrels, courageous and cowardly, it is not self-evident but an act of faith that the aggregate is worthy and evil in a minority. Comte's Calendar, with its attempt to sift out the most adorable of humanity, is a witness to the difficulty of worshipping humanity in general, for it is simply an attempt to draw attention solely to one aspect of humanity to the exclusion of the others. Mr. Frederic Harrison admits that humanity is 'no godhead,' but 'on the whole' its story is inspiring, and it is 'relatively' worthy of honour, and therefore presumably, in the absence of anything else, it is fitted to be the object of religion. It is clear that such an estimate is by no means a 'positive' fact. It depends upon the temperament of the estimator, and the evidence upon which the estimate is based can only be judged from standards which are bound to be more or less arbitrary. One may join Mr. Harrison in the hope that there is more good than bad in humanity, but even at that it is a quantitative, not a qualitative, distinction which makes the object 'higher' than the subject of worship. It seems, therefore, difficult in any intelligible sense to include the worship of humanity

in any definition that may be framed of the term 'religion.'

Indeed it would seem to be, as Mr. Chesterton remarks, as impossible to worship humanity as to worship the Savile Club. Comte embodied humanity in an individual representative, preferably a woman, thus substituting a concrete goddess for abstract humanity—a notable admission of the impotence of a merely abstract conception as the object of worship. The conception of God is concrete, and has sanctions of authority and power; the conception of humanity is abstract. Humanity neither made itself, nor explains itself, and does not know itself. How, therefore, it can be in any sense a 'dominant power' over man Positivism neither makes intelligible in theory nor reveals in practice.

Apart from the difficulty of including the Positivist religion in any definition of the term, it fails to fulfil the characteristics associated with religion. It prattles of prayer and immortality, but gives to these terms entirely different significations from those employed by religion generally. It transfers to humanity, or rather to an estimate of the worth of humanity, the sentiments religion attaches to God, but without being able to transfer to humanity the grounds upon which God is worshipped. In one sense Positivism is contradictory in trying to introduce a religion at all, for it departs from the 'facts' it adores to an element of faith which is none the less faith because it is based on the facts of progress, goodness, and love.

The chief value of the Positivist religion would seem to be its witness to the impossibility of con-

templating life without at least something like a religious standpoint. The excellences of Positivist precepts are many, its insistence on our duties to humanity admirable; but are these amiabilities to be allowed to masquerade under a name which they do not connote? The term 'religion' is wide, but if it is to include the Positivist religion it becomes a width of absurdity. Positivism is a sociology, and may be ethical, but it breaks down every canon of a workable, even of a minimum, definition of religion. Without desiring to interfere with the right of the Positivists to worship as they please and what they please, it must be contended that they have no right to the term 'religion,' and they would be wise to seek a more appropriate and less misleading description for their views. One cannot play fast and loose with the connotation which a term well-nigh universally bears because a small section desire to borrow it to describe what it does not and cannot convey. To commandeer the terminology and conceptions of religion in order to invest with them views which have no other claim to be regarded as religious than these borrowed garments can bestow is to embarrass yet more severely the already arduous task of definition; and for these reasons it is held here that Positivism affords neither a religion nor a religious philosophy.

## 2. *Pessimism*

Unlike Positivism, Pessimism does not parade itself as a religion, but none the less it is, in theory at least, a substitute for a religion, since it is neither

more nor less than the reversal of the religious standpoint. It has, therefore, a very considerable theoretical interest for religious philosophy as a possible alternative to its scheme.

Religion is vitally concerned with the relation of value to experience, and is the expression of the faith that experience has value,<sup>1</sup> its ultimate task indeed being to estimate the values of reality. Pessimism takes the opposite course, and denies the value of experience, usually from a hedonistic basis, but not necessarily so.

It might seem that Pessimism were the entire abnegation of religious philosophy, based on the direct negative, as 'the devil's ten commandments' were said to be the Commandments with the positive made negative and the negative positive. But this is not so, since in the very assertion that there is a fundamental dissonance between experience and value Pessimism tacitly acknowledges the existence of value. It is not, therefore, the categorical denial of value, but the denial of the harmony that religion believes to subsist between value and existence. Pessimism is accordingly the negative of the religious judgement. Religion and Pessimism deal with the same terms and the same relation between them, only the former regards the relation as congruous, the latter as incongruous.

<sup>1</sup> Buddhism, as elsewhere, seems the exception to the general rule of religion. Buddhist pessimism is philosophical rather than religious, however, and the more that Buddhism becomes religious instead of simply philosophical the less important and influential becomes the Buddha's pessimism.

An absolute Pessimism would, therefore, seem to be impossible. The Buddha, pessimistic as regards this existence, taught of the blessedness of Nirvana, which is not to be understood as extinction positively but as the negation of all that for us constitutes existence, and here reality and value are at one. The fact that no positive characterization of Nirvana can be afforded does not affect this implication. Similarly Schopenhauer turned for relief to art and to sympathy, and even to the asceticism he advocated but did not practise. In like manner there is no absolute Scepticism. Scepticism does not deny the existence of truth, but merely that man can attain truth; Pessimism does not deny value, but merely that man can attain value. Pessimism, therefore, stands related to religion in the same way in which Scepticism is related to philosophy.

Pessimism is not a natural outlook, and it is witness to the religious character of man's nature that he naturally and normally believes in a harmonious relation between value and reality. Pessimism, therefore, is not to be regarded as an ultimate and ever-present counterfoil to religion, since it appears late in the day, when man is discouraged by his efforts to establish the relation of value and reality in a satisfactory manner. It is, in fine, a religious judgement that has turned sour.

Pessimism may therefore be regarded as the religious attitude minus religious faith. For this reason it may be called a substitute for a religious philosophy, although it could not be constructed into a religion. Its importance, as it has been



already said, is theoretical rather than practical. It serves as a constant reminder that religion must justify her faith, since, as the existence of Pessimism proves, that faith is not inevitable from that standpoint. In practice Pessimism is neither very consistent nor attractive, and Schopenhauer's hot dinners and soft bed form a perennial source of jests at the expense of his philosophical conclusions. Since it has been found to beset religion so little in practice, its powerful challenge to the philosophy and whole theory of religion is largely disregarded. Yet it must be considered, from the theoretical standpoint at least, as a very significant possibility, and one that is able to rank with the religious attitude as no less capable of adoption. The only reasons that can be adduced to refute Pessimism are practical reasons. It is theoretically justifiable. In saying this, of course, a distinction is drawn between Pessimism as an attitude of mind and the embodiment of that attitude in the philosophies of Schopenhauer, Von Hartmann, Mainländer, and others. The theoretical refutations of Pessimism criticize, not unjustly, Schopenhauer's principle of Will, Hartmann's philosophy of the unconscious, or the process by which man is regarded as the objectivized expression of this blind Will, and so forth. But the fact that Pessimism has been yoked with some unsatisfactory theorizing does not disprove the validity of the pessimistic attitude, which does not stand or fall with any particular exposition of it. As an interpretation of the relation of value and experience it is still possible, and can be denied only by appeal to practice. Were it not for the powerful considera-

tions which practice adduces, Pessimism would be much more extensive and formidable. Its challenge, however, is far less menacing to those philosophies which lay stress upon practice than to those whose sole criterion is abstract rationality. Indirectly, therefore, the impotence of Pessimism is a corroboration of the emphasis that has been placed upon the importance of practice in philosophy throughout these pages.

One of these practical arguments may be derived by reference to an obvious escape in suicide. So obvious does it seem that one is apt to take for granted that there must be a valid reason in the theory of Pessimism why it is not advocated, and the halting arguments against this course have gained more acceptance than they merit. Yet they amount merely to an entirely arbitrary assertion that suicide is a witness to the value of life and evil of pain only, and therefore vain; or a somewhat surprising dictum that holds that for the individual to shuffle off existence is useless unless the race does so. The only valid theoretical reason would lie in some theory of metempsychosis or *Karma*. Here Buddhism is logical, but in so far as Western Pessimism does not, or cannot on its principles, provide either safeguard, it is practical but not theoretical considerations that restrain from suicide. Schopenhauer, after dallying with the subject in one of his essays, merely suggests that ecclesiasticism only has made suicide a crime—a result which certainly confirms this conclusion.

If Pessimism, as a philosophy, has not been very influential, religion in certain cases is frequently

faced by an unreasoned pessimism which, like its reasoned counterpart, results from the souring of a previous attitude, generally from personal causes of sorrow or loss. There is also within the most orthodox expressions of religion a constant tendency on the part of some to assert a pessimism of a particular kind which regards the values of life as a diminishing quantity, and mankind as upon a down-grade career. I venture to suggest that, in such cases, religious philosophy, by vindicating more boldly the optimism that should be inherent in all true religion, might indirectly be of great practical service in checking this popular pessimism, and encountering the spirit that abandons hope for the world. The best criterion of a religious philosophy will be found its applicability to such concrete problems, and this may well be counted amongst those practical questions which it is possible for the effort of a religious philosophy to solve. Its solution would be a notable vindication of the place and purpose of a religious philosophy in life.

### 3. *Nescience*

The last substitute for a religious philosophy that will be considered is a resort to Agnosticism. It might be said that, in a certain sense, each of these substitutes is of the character of an agnosticism, and that any mode of thought opposed to religious philosophy is likely to share to some extent this feature. Positivism is Agnosticism plus Gnosticism. Pessimism is the scepticism of values, and the nescience represented by Mansel and

Spencer is a speculative Agnosticism convinced of the incompetence of reason with regard to the truths of religious philosophy. Spencer is merely sceptical; Mansel, on the other hand, parallels the Positivists, who, agnostic as regards metaphysics, are assured that positive knowledge is still theirs, by placing side by side with his mistrust of reason faith in revelation — a somewhat inconsequent counterfoil. Moreover, Mansel started from the metaphysics of Sir William Hamilton, and Spencer was not metaphysically inclined. On the other hand, Mansel exercised an undoubted influence upon Spencer, even though the latter rejects the idea of revelation, and provides such relief to his scepticism as is possible in entirely another direction.

Mansel's nescience is based upon the argument that consciousness deals only with relative terms, and is thereby debarred from any knowledge of the Infinite which is the negation of consciousness. It follows that the whole question will be decided at the outset. On Mansel's principles his conclusion is inevitable. It can only be combated by denying the negative conception of the Infinite, by contending that the absolutely unconditioned is a meaningless phrase, a conception that commits suicide. If this be established Mansel's nescience falls to the ground, and almost all subsequent philosophy, intellectualist or personalist, has united in condemning his view.

Mansel continually protests against the attempt to construct an object in thought answering to the terms 'infinite' and 'unconditioned.' Yet he believes in such an object, his scepticism being exercised as

regards its thinkability. Though the unthinkable is by no means obviously the same as the non-existent, nothing can be assumed about it, not even that it is unthinkable. It is for this reason that an absolute scepticism is impossible.

Mansel, however, is influenced by the Hegelian idea of a limit implying the existence of that which is beyond it, when he asserts that, though the Infinite cannot be conceived, it exists by the very reason of its being beyond the limits of our consciousness. This idea, however, is a spatial metaphor of a very mischievous character. To negative our conceptions is not to find a limit, but really to speculate upon the meaningless and construct it into that which is but has no meaning. This is in reality a contradictory process, for to say that anything *is*, is to attribute to it a meaning, and whilst the 'unthinkable' may none the less be existent, the meaningless can in no sense be said to be. A more perverse conception than an 'unthinkable' which 'is' and yet has no meaning it would be difficult to frame.

Mansel's resort to revelation has been summarily dismissed by the statement that this Infinite *ex hypothesi* could not reveal anything. Mansel, however, regards revelation from a humanistic standpoint, not as related to God; and, since he held that we cannot possibly think the Infinite, we cannot tell, so at least he would probably assume, what it can do nor how it can do it. It is the old chasm between the God of religion and the God of philosophy; and, since the latter is unknowable, the former may be as well as anything else its revelation.

This is, of course, pure assumption; but the same scepticism concerning the Infinite that forbids its thinkability equally applies to the attempt to deny that anything concerning it cannot be. I am not aware that Mansel expressly says this, but it seems involved upon his principles, and possibly would be the way in which he would have met the above objection. It is the paradox of scepticism that the absolutely unmeaning may thus come to be used as meaning anything.

Mansel's view of 'the only true philosophy of religion' is that which man is content to practise where he cannot speculate. It is a religious positivism less consistent than Comte's, for Comte provides for 'religion' amongst that which can be known; Mansel's revelation comes from the unknowable. It is miscalled 'philosophy of religion,' therefore, for religion, on this view, has no philosophy. It is hardly religion; at least it will not fulfil any definition of religion. It is rather an ethical mode of life based on blind acceptance of a so-called religious revelation. Though the practice of religion is primary and the theory secondary, and the theory must be proved by practice, a practice divorced from theory is bound to suffer. In the decay of any system, the theory goes almost always before the practice; but the practice follows. Man does not live by logic alone, but he cannot live for ever without it, and Mansel's destruction of religious theory must sooner or later destroy the practice of piety he desired to save.

Herbert Spencer's 'Unknowable' has been likewise the object of much critical scorn. Its right to

its name has been challenged on the ground that we must at least know that it is unknowable, and Mr. Bradley exercises his wit in a characteristic footnote by remarking that it is taken 'for God simply and solely because we do not know what the devil it can be.' Spencer's statements are by no means lucid or consistent where the Unknowable is concerned. He does not, however, lay stress upon the absolute sense of the term 'Unknowable,' but tries to convey by it the notion of a reality of which we may be aware, but cannot be said to know, without violating the significance usually attached to the term 'knowledge.' While his principles do not allow it, his conviction, none the less, is that something must be done to relieve the barrenness of Mansel's nescience, and he gets into desperate straits in the attempt. He tries to use 'Unknowable' as a caution rather than a characterization; he even inclines to the possibility of a future when mind might be able to grasp what now it cannot contain. The whole of Spencer's arguments amount to nothing more than an effort to maintain an impossible balance between an agnostic epistemology and an empirical regard for a fact of such importance as he was bound to admit religion to be.

Although empirical in his epistemology, Spencer follows the metaphysically-minded Mansel in asserting that the Infinite is *ex hypothesi* unknowable. Profiting, however, by criticisms of Mansel, he adds that there are thoughts which, whilst not definite or complete, are none the less 'normal affections of the intellect.' Herein he seeks to find rather more *locus standi* than Mansel could allow for the Infinite



by representing that thus its existence may be said to be 'known,' but not its nature.

It would appear that Spencer comes in sight of a land of promise into which he cannot enter. Arguing, with Mansel, that the relative implies the non-relative is always a fruitless proceeding, because a logical implication is not an entity, much less a deity. However undeniable its logical existence may be, it is impossible to leap from logical existence to concrete being. Those who speculate in what is known as metageometry may construct a conception of the fourth dimension. The conception is quite possible, and has, I understand, a certain theoretical value, but there are few who believe in the existence of such a dimension. The conception of the non-relative stands in the same case, and there are places where Spencer seems to realize this. Religious beliefs, none the less, gain a certain respect from him for empirical reasons, and though his epistemology really debars them, he feels he must make some allowance. So he attempts to give the non-relative a small right of existence as an inchoate and incomplete affection of the intellect. He fails to see how futile the boon is, and does not recognize that, apart from all speculative considerations, and without involving the Infinite or Non-relative, by admitting the validity of the testimony of religious experience an explanation of the persistence and power of religion can be attained from an empirical standpoint. The strange part of it is, however, that Spencer, having declared that the ultimate ideas of science and religion are alike unthinkable,

proceeds to do justice, as he thinks, to both by making over the knowable to science and bestowing the gratuitous Unknowable upon religion. It is another of those contradictions which beset all Spencer's attempts to have and not to have an Unknowable that he should deem it possible that the 'ultimate' unknowable character of the ideas upon which science depends should have no effect upon the 'proximate' ideas of science, yet, in the exactly parallel case of religion, should cloud it with uncertainty.

The epistemology of Spencer and Mansel is justified of her children. Yet both testify to a dissatisfaction which they cannot remove by the desperate expedient of revelation, or the halting justification Spencer tries to afford. Neither can offer a religious philosophy. In some ways Spencer comes nearer to release than Mansel, and even grows bold enough to speak of the Unknowable as 'infinite and eternal energy,' and 'cause'—cases in which, I suppose, he must be regarded as speaking by grace and not with authority. The inherently contradictory character of both attempts strengthens the belief that this mental wriggling to reach that which is, and yet is not to be known, simply reveals that such epistemological presumptions as Mansel and Spencer display are not harmonious with reality nor with man's relation thereto. It is not upon such ground that justice can be done to the nature of man or of the universe, and knowledge will require a wider basis if a theory is to be found that can even hope to meet the requirements of the entirety of experience.



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